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XL 44

Presented by R. Simpson, Esq.

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T H E
P O E M S
O F
M R. G R A Y.
W I T H
N O T E S

B Y

GILBERT WAKEFIELD, B. A.
LATE FELLOW OF JESUS-COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

*Ingenium cui fit, cui mens divinior, atque os
Magna sonaturum, des nominis hujus honorem.*

HORAT.

Creative Genius; and the glow divine,
That warms and melts th' enthusiastic soul;
A pomp and prodigality of phrase:
These form the poet, and these shine in thee!



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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

NO curious Speculations of Criticism and no profound discoveries in the art will recommend the notes, which are here presented to the Public. The principal intention of them is to illustrate an admired poet in such a manner, as may contribute to improve the taste of the less accomplished, and may furnish some degree of entertainment even to the scholar. For my own part, I neither approve nor relish those subtleties of critical investigation, which are more calculated to display the acuteness of their author, than to correct the opinions and improve the judgement of the reader. On this account, I have not been sparing of quotations from the poets: but these quotations will speak their own apology, and constitute some of the chief beauties of ancient and modern poetry. No author seemed to be a more proper vehicle for remarks of this nature, at once useful and entertaining, than MR. GRAY: for he has exhibited a strength of imagination, a sublimity and tenderness of thought, equal to any writer; with a richness of phrase and an accuracy of composition, superior to all.

Besides, such an edition of this excellent poet appeared particularly seasonable at this time, when the severity of DR. JOHNSON'S strictures, without some antidote, under the sanction of his respectable character, might operate with malignant influence upon the public taste, and become ultimately injurious to the cause of polite literature.

A cultivated understanding finds no indulgence so luxurious and delightful, as the feast which poetic genius furnishes for it's entertainment. But utility, and not amusement only, should be the grand object of all our pursuits: and

and I would fain persuade myself, that an intimate connexion subsists between letters and morality, between sensibility and taste, between an improved mind and a virtuous heart. A few exceptions will not invalidate a position, which is, I think, in general authenticated by experience. If it be a delusion, it is at least innocent, and honourable to human nature. It is a delusion, in which we are countenanced by the wisdom of former ages.

————— εἰς γὰρ ἵπνον,
 Οὐδ' εἰς ἐξαπνίας γλυκερωτέρον, εἰς μελισσῆς
 Ἀνθίας, ὅσον εἰμὶν Μῦσαι φίλαι· ἕς γὰρ ὄρωσαι
 Γαθεύσῃ, τῶς ὅτι πύλω δαλυσταῖο Κίρκαι.

Nor is soft sleep, nor breath of early spring
 So sweet, nor to the bee the honied flower,
 As to the taste refin'd the Muse's song.
 No lure of *sordid pleasure* can entice
 Her sons; no *Circe's* fascinating cup!

NOTTINGHAM, MAY 30, 1786.

THE LIFE OF
T H O M A S G R A Y.

THOMAS GRAY, the subject of this narrative, was the fifth son of Mr. Philip Gray, whose father was a considerable merchant, and who himself was engaged in business*, though not to the pecuniary advantage of his family, for being of a shy and indolent temper, he suffered those opportunities of improving his fortune to escape him, which others would have eagerly embraced. His son Thomas was born December 26, 1716, in Cornhill, London, and sent early to Eton school, under the tuition of Mr. Antrobus, his maternal uncle. This gentleman, being both a good scholar and a man of taste, was assiduous in directing the attention of his nephew to those sources of improvement which he afterwards applied to with so much success. During the time of Mr. Gray's continuance in this abode of the Muses, he contracted the strictest intimacy with two of their votaries, whose dispositions in many respects were congenial with his own.— One of these was the Honourable Horace Walpole, who hath been so long conspicuous for his skill in the fine arts, and his love of letters; the other, Richard West, Esq; son to a late lord chancellor of Ireland, and grandson by his mother to the celebrated Bishop Burnet. As the accident of his uncle's being an assistant at Eton was the cause of

* A money-scrivener.

his going thither for his classical learning, so to this gentleman's being fellow of Peterhouse, in Cambridge, it was owing that he was sent to the same university, and admitted, in the year 1734, a pensioner of the same college.

The relish Mr. Gray had contracted for polite literature, before his removal to Cambridge, rendered the abstruse studies which then almost wholly engrossed, and at present too much occupy, the attention of young men altogether tasteless and irksome: still

“ Song was his favourite and first pursuit; ”

and though his thoughts were directed towards the law as a profession for life, yet like Garrick, in the picture between Tragedy and Comedy, he hung back with fond reluctance on the Muse. Nor was this bias of his inclination a little influenced by the constant exhortations of his two friends, particularly Mr. West, who was now removed to Christ's Church, Oxford, and whose propensity to poetry, and dislike to the law, appear to have even exceeded his own. After having passed four years in college, Mr. Gray returned to his father in town, where he remained till the following spring, at which time Mr. Walpole, being about to travel, invited his friend to go along with him. The invitation was accepted, and they accordingly set out for Italy together, but some disagreement arising between them (occasioned, as Mr. Walpole ingenuously confesses, less by his companion's conduct than his own) they parted at Rheggio, whence, after having made a short stay at Venice, Mr. Gray returned. The time, however, devoted to this excursion, was by no means lost: nothing that our poet saw was suffered to escape him. From no relation, though purposely designed

signed for the publick eye, can so much information be drawn as from his casual letters. During this interval of his friend's absence Mr. West, finding that his aversion to the profession for which he had destined himself (and with a view to which he had resided some time in the Temple) became almost insuperable, wrote to Mr. Gray on the subject, expressing in the strongest manner the *ennui* that almost overwhelmed him. To this letter an answer was returned which presents the finest picture of the writer's mind, and abounds with a justness of thinking far beyond his years. Gray was now at Florence, where he had spent in all eleven months, amusing himself at intervals with poetical compositions. It was here that he conceived the design and produced the first book, of a didactick poem in Latin, entitled *De Principiis Cogitandi*, and addressed to Mr. West, a work which he unfortunately never completed. From Florence proceeding to Venice he returned to England, deviating but little from the route he had gone, but particularly taking once more in his way the Grand Chartreuse, where in this visit he wrote on the album of that monastery the following Alcaick ode :

Oh Tu, severi Religio loci,
 Quocunque gaudes nomine (non leve
 Nativa nam certe fluenta
 Numen habet, veteresque sylvas;

Præfentiozem et conspiciamus Deum
 Per invias rupes, fera per juga,
 Clivosque præruptos, sonantes
 Inter aquas, nemorumque noctem;

Quam si repòstus sub trabe citrea
 Fulgeret auro, et Phidiaca manu)

Salve vocanti ritè fesso et
Da placidam juveni quietem.

Quod si invidendis sedibus, et frui
Fortuna sacra lege silentii
Vetat volentem, me resorbens
In medios violenta fluctus:

Saltem remoto des, Pater, angulo
Horas senectæ ducere liberas;
Tutumque vulgari tumultu
Surripias, hominumque curis.

On the 1st of September, 1741, he arrived in London, where he had not been much more than two months before his father was carried off by the gout, a malady from which he had long and severely suffered. As the inactivity and ill health of the elder Mr. Gray had prevented him from accumulating the fortune he might have acquired with ease, so his imprudence had induced him to squander no inconsiderable part of what he possessed. The son therefore finding his patrimony inadequate to the profession he had intended to follow without diminishing the income of his mother and his aunt, resolved for this reason to relinquish it; yet to silence their importunities on the subject he proposed only to change the line of it, and accordingly went to Cambridge in the year 1742, to take his Bachelor's degree. But the inconveniencies incident to a scanty fortune were not the only evils he had now to combat. Poor West, the friend of his heart, was overborne by a consumption and family distresses; and these, alas! were burthens which friendship could not remove. After languishing a considerable time under their united oppression, this amiable youth fell a victim to both, on the 1st of June,

1742.

1742, at Pope's, and was interred in the chancel of Hatfield church, beneath a stone bearing the epitaph below*.

From the time of Mr. Gray's return out of Italy to the date of this melancholy event, he seems to have employed himself chiefly in writing, for in this interval he communicated to Mr. West the *fragment of his tragedy, and several other pieces*. The shock, however, of so severe a stroke, disarranged his plans, and broke off his designs.—The only addition he afterwards made to his didactic poem, is the apostrophe to the friend he had lost†; and no-
thing

* Here lieth the body of Richard West, Esq; only son to the Right Hon. Richard West, Esq; late Lord Chancellor of Ireland, who died the 21st of June, 1742, in the 28th year of his age.

† Hæcenus haud segnīs Naturæ arcana retexi
Musarum interpres, primusque Britannia per arva
Romano liquidum deduxi flumine rivum.
Cum Tu opere in medio, spes tanti et causa laboris,
Linqvis et æternam fati te condis in umbram!
Vidi egomet duro graviter concussa dolore
Pectora, in alterius non unquam lenta dolorem;
Et languere oculos vidi, et pallefcere amantem,
Vultum, quo numquam Pietas nisi rare, Fidesque,
Altus amor Veri, et purum spirabat Honestum.
Visa tamen tardi demum inclementia morbi
Cessare est, reducemque iterum roseo ore Salutem
Speravi, atque una tecum, dilecte Favoni!
Credulus heu longos, ut quondam, fallere Soles:
Heu spes nequicquam dulces, atque irrita vota!
Heu mæstos Soles, sine te quos ducere flendo
Per desideria, et questus jam cogor inanes!

At Tu sancta anima, et nostri non indiga luctus,
Stellanti templo, sincerique ætheris igne,
Unde orta es, fruere; atque o si secura, nec ultra
Mortalis, notos olim miserata labores
Respectes, tenuesque vacet cognoscere curas;

Humanam

thing can more pathetically display the feelings of a heart wounded by such a loss, than that apostrophe and the sonnet in which he gave them vent :

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
 And redd'ning Phœbus lifts his golden fire,
 The birds in vain their am'rous descant join,
 Or chearful fields resume their green attire ;
 These ears, alas! for other notes repine,
 A diff'rent object do these eyes require ;
 My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine,
 And in my breast th' imperfect joys expire :
 Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
 And new-born pleasure brings to happier men,
 The fields to all their wonted tribute bear,
 To warm their little loves the birds complain ;
 I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
 And weep the more because I weep in vain.

The Ode to Spring was written early in June, at Stoke, whither he had gone to visit his mother, and sent to Mr. West before Mr. Gray had heard of his death : how he employed his pen when this ode was returned to him with the melancholy news we have already seen. Impressions of grief on the generality of mankind, like characters marked on the sand of the sea, are speedily effaced by the

Humanam si forte alta de sede procellam
 Contemplere, metus, stimulosque cupidinis acres,
 Gaudiaque et gemitus, parvoque in corde tumultum
 Irarum ingentem, et sævos sub pectore fluctus ;
 Respice et has lacrymas, memori quas ictus amore
 Fundo; quod possum, juxta lugere sepulchrum
 Dum juvat, et mutæ vana hæc jactare favillæ.

influx

influx of business or pleasure, but the traces of them on the heart of Gray were too deeply inscribed to be soon obliterated; we shall not therefore wonder at the subjects he has chosen, nor at the solemnity with which he hath treated them. His Ode on the Prospect of Eton College, as well as the Hymn to Adversity, were both written in the following August, and it is highly probable that the Elegy in the Country Church-Yard was begun also about this time.

Having made a visit of some length at Stoke, to his mother and aunt, our poet returned to Cambridge, which from this period became his principal home. The conveniencies resulting from that situation, to a person of circumscribed fortune and a studious temper, were in his estimation more than a counterbalance for the dislike which, on several accounts, he bore to the place. Less pleased with exerting his own powers than in contemplating the exertions of others, he almost wholly devoted himself to the best writers of Greece; and so assiduously did he apply to the study of their works, as in the course of six years to have read with critical exactness, almost every author of note in that language. During this interval, however, he was not so entirely occupied with his stated employment, as to have no time for expressing his aversion to the ignorance and dullness which appeared to surround him; but of what he intended on this subject, a short fragment only remains.

In the year 1744, he appears to have given up entirely his didactic poem, and to have relinquished, for some time at least, any further solicitations of the Muse. Mr. Walpole, notwithstanding, being desirous to preserve what
he

he had already written, and to perpetuate the merit of their deceased friend, importuned Mr. Gray to publish his own poems, together with those of Mr. West; but this Mr. Gray declined, from the apprehension that the joint stock of both would hardly fill a small volume. A favourite cat belonging to Mr. Walpole, happening about this time (1747) to be drowned, Mr. Gray amused himself with writing on the occasion an elegant little ode, in which he hath happily united both humour and instruction. But the following year was distinguished by a far more important effort of his Muse, the Fragment on Education and Government, which is superior to every thing in the same style of writing that our own language can boast of, and perhaps any other.

ESSAY I.

— Πότῳ ἢ γὰρ; τὰν γὰρ αἰδαν

Οὐτε πο εἰς Αἶδαν γι τὸν ἐκλελαθοντα φυλαξέῃς

Theoc.

As sickly plants betray a niggard earth,
 Whose barren bosom starves her gen'rous birth,
 Nor genial warmth nor genial juice retains
 Their roots to feed and fill their verdant veins,
 And as in climes where Winter holds his reign
 The soil tho' fertile will not teem in vain,
 Forbids her gems to swell, her shades to rise,
 Nor trusts her blossoms to the churlish skies;
 So draw mankind in vain the vital airs
 Unform'd, unfriended, by those kindly cares
 That health and vigour to the soul impart,
 Spread the young thought and warm the op'ning heart;
 So fond Instruction on the growing pow'rs
 Of Nature idly lavishes her stores

If

If equal Justice with unclouded face
 Smile not indulgent on the rising race,
 And scatter with a free tho' frugal hand
 Light golden show'rs of plenty o'er the land:
 But Tyranny has fix'd her empire there
 To check their tender hopes with chilling fear
 And blast the blooming promise of the year.

This spacious animated scene survey
 From where the rolling orb that gives the day
 His sable sons with nearer course surrounds:
 To either pole and life's remotest bounds:
 How rude so'er th' exterior form we find,
 Howe'er opinion tinge the vary'd mind,
 Alike to all the kind impartial Heav'n
 The sparks of truth and happiness has giv'n;
 With sense to feel, with mem'ry to retain,
 They follow pleasure and they fly from pain;
 Their judgment mends the plan their fancy draws,
 Th' event presages and explores the cause;
 The soft returns of gratitude they know,
 By fraud elude, by force repel the foe;
 While mutual wishes mutual woes endear,
 The social smile and sympathetick tear.

Say, then, thro' ages by what fate confin'd
 To diff'rent climes seem diff'rent souls assign'd?
 Here measur'd Laws and philosophick Ease
 Fix and improve the polish'd arts of peace;
 There Industry and Gain their vigils keep,
 Command the winds and tame th' unwilling deep;
 Here force and hardy deeds of blood prevail,
 There languid Pleasure sighs in ev'ry gale.
 Oft' o'er the trembling nations from afar
 Has Scythia breath'd the living cloud of war,

And where the deluge burst with sweepy sway
Their arms, their kings, their gods, were roll'd away :
As oft' have issued, host impelling host,
The blue-ey'd myriads from the Baltick coast;
The prostrate South to the destroyer yields
Her boasted titles and her golden fields :
With grim delight the brood of Winter view
A brighter day, and heav'ns of azure hue,
Scent the new fragrance of the breathing rose,
And quaff the pendent vintage as it grows.
Proud of the yoke, and pliant to the rod,
Why yet does Asia dread a monarch's nod,
While European freedom still withstands
Th' encroaching tide that drowns her less'ning lands,
And sees far off with an indignant groan
Her native plains and empires once her own ?
Can op'ner skies and suns of fiercer flame
O'erpow'r the fire that animates our frame,
As lamps that shed at eve a chearful ray
Fade and expire beneath the eye of day ?
Need we the influence of the northern star
To string our nerves and steel our hearts to war ?
And where the face of Nature laughs around
Must sick'ning Virtue fly the tainted ground ?
Unmanly thought ! what seasons can controul,
What fancy'd zone can circumscribe the soul,
Who conscious of the source from whence she springs
By Reason's light on Resolution's wings,
Spite of her frail companion, dauntless goes
O'er Lybia's deserts and thro' Zembla's snows ?
She bids each slumb'ring energy awake,
Another touch another temper take,
Suspends th' inferior laws that rule our clay :
The stubborn elements confess her sway ;

Their

Their little wants their low desires refine;
And raise the mortal to a height divine.

Not but the human fabrick from the birth
Imbibes a flavour of its parent earth :
As various tracks enforce a various toil,
The manners speak the idiom of their soil:
An iron face the mountain-cliffs maintain,
Foes to the gentler genius of the plain ;
For where unweary'd sinews must be found
With side-long plough to quell the flinty ground;
To turn the torrent's swift descending flood,
To brave the savage rushing from the wood,
What wonder if to patient valour train'd
They guard with spirit what by strength they gain'd ?
And while their rocky ramparts round they see,
The rough abode of Want and Liberty,
(As lawless force from confidence will grow)
Insult the plenty of the vales below ?
What wonder in the fultry climes that spread
Where Nile redundant o'er his summer-bed
From his broad bosom life and verdure flings,
And broods o'er Ægypt with his wat'ry wings;
If with advent'rous oar and ready sail
The dusky people drive before the gale,
Or on frail floats to neighb'ring cities ride,
That rise and glitter o'er the ambient tide ?

* * * * *

How much it is to be wished that Gray, instead of compiling chronological tables, had completed what he thus admirably begun ! In the year 1750 he put his last hand to the Elegy in the Country Church-yard, which

when finished was communicated first to Mr. Walpole, and by him to several persons of distinction. This brought Mr. Gray acquainted with Lady Cobham, and furnished an occasion for his Long Story, a composition in which the different colours of wit and humour are peculiarly and not less intimately blended than the shifting hues on the faces of a diamond. The elegy having been for some time privately transmitted from one hand to another, at length found its way into publick through The Magazine of Magazines. This disgraceful mode of appearance subjected the Author to the necessity of exhibiting it under a less disadvantageous form; and Mr. Bentley soon after wishing to supply every ornament that his pencil could contribute, drew, not only for it but also for the rest of Mr. Gray's productions *, a set of designs, which were handsomely repaid by some very beautiful stanzas, of which unfortunately no perfect copy remains. In the March of 1753, Mr. Gray sustained a loss which he long severely felt: his mother, to whom his conduct was exemplary for the discharge of every filial duty, and merited all the tenderness and attention she received, was taken from him by death. The lines in which Mr. Pope hath expressed his piety, beautiful as they are, and much as they deserve to be praised, appear notwithstanding to excite less of sympathy than a single stroke in the epitaph on Mrs. Gray †, or a passage in a letter to Mr. Mason, written the following December, on the deaths of his father and friend: " I

* The head-piece to the Long Story, exhibiting a view of Stoke-Pogeis church and mansion, was copied from a sketch by Mr. Gray. The Church-Yard was the subject of his elegy.

† Here sleep the remains of
DOROTHY GRAY,
widow, the careful tender mother
of many children, one of whom alone
had the misfortune to survive her.

" have

“ have seen the scene you describè, and know how dreadful it is; I know too I am the better for it. We are all idle and thoughtless things, and have no sense, no use in the world, any longer than the sad impression lasts: *the deeper it is engraved the better.*”

Mr. Gray, as is evident by a letter to Dr. Wharton, had finished his Ode on the Progress of Poetry early in 1755; his Bard also was begun about this time, and in the year following the beautiful fragment on the Pleasures of Vicissitude. From the loose hints in his common-place book, he appears to have planned a fourth ode on the connexion between genius and grandeur, but it cannot now be ascertained if any part of it was actually written. A vacancy in the office of Poet-Laureate was occasioned in 1757, by the death of Colly Cibber. The Duke of Devonshire, being at that time Chamberlain, made a polite offer of it to Mr. Gray, through the hands of Lord John Cavendish his brother; but the disgrace brought upon that office by the profligacy and inability of some who had filled it probably induced Mr. Gray to decline the appointment. This part of our poet's life was chiefly devoted to literary pursuits and the cultivation of friendship. It is obvious from the testimony of his letters that he was indefatigable in the former, and that he was always ready to perform kind offices in the latter. Sir William Williams, an accomplished and gallant young officer, having been killed at Belleisle, his friend Mr. Fred. Montagu proposed to erect a monument over him, and with this view requested Mr. Gray to furnish the epitaph. His slight acquaintance with Sir William would have been a sufficient reason for declining the task, but the friendliness of Mr. Montagu's disposition, and the sincerity of affliction with which he

was

was affected, wrought so powerfully upon Mr. Gray, that he could not refuse him, though he was by no means able to satisfy himself with the verses he wrote. The professorship of modern languages and history, in the University of Cambridge, becoming vacant in 1762, through the death of Mr. Turner, Mr. Gray was spirited up by some of his friends to ask of Lord Bute the succession. His application however failed, the office having been promised to Lady Lowther for the tutor of Sir James, from a motive which reflected more honour on her Ladyship than on the gentlemen who succeeded. In 1765, Mr. Gray, ever attached to the beauties of Nature as well as to the love of antiquities, undertook a journey to Scotland for the purpose of gratifying his curiosity and taste. During his stay in this country Dr. Beattie found the means of engaging his notice and friendship. Through the intervention of this gentleman the Marischal College of Aberdeen had requested to know if the degree of Doctor of Laws would be acceptable to Gray; but this mark of their attention he civilly declined. In December 1767, Dr. Beattie, still desirous that his country should afford some testimony of its regard to the merit of our poet, solicited his permission to print at the University press of Glasgow an elegant edition of his works; Doddsley had before asked the like favour, and Mr. Gray, unwilling to refuse, gratified both with a copy containing a few notes and the imitations of the old Norwegian poetry, intended to supplant the Long Story, which was printed at first only to illustrate Mr. Bentley's designs. The death of Mr. Bocket in the July following left another opening to the professorship which he had before unsuccessfully sought. Lord Bute however was not in office, and the Duke of Grafton, to preclude a request, within two days of the vacancy

cancy appointed Mr. Gray. Cambridge before had been his residence from choice, it now became so from obligation, and the greater part of his time there was filled up by his old engagements or diverted to new ones. It has been suggested that he once embraced the project of republishing Strabo, and there are reasons to believe that he meant it, as the many geographical disquisitions he left behind him appear to have been too minute for the gratification of general inquiry. The like observation may be transferred to Plato and the Greek Anthologia, as he had taken uncommon pains with both, and has left a MS of the latter fit for the press. His design of favouring the publick with the history of English poetry may be spoken of with more certainty, as in this he had not only engaged with Mr. Mason as a colleague, but actually paraphrased the Norse and Welch poems inserted in his Works for specimens of the wild spirit which animated the bards of ancient days. The extensive compass however of the subject, and the knowledge that it was also in the hands of Mr. Warton, induced him to relinquish what he had thus successfully begun. Nor did his love for the antiquities of his country confine his researches to its poetry alone: the structures of our ancestors and their various improvements particularly engaged his attention. Hitherto there hath nothing so authentick and accurate on the subject of Gothick architecture appeared, as the observations upon it drawn up by Mr. Gray, and inserted by Mr. Betham in his Hist. of Ely. Of heraldry, its correlative science, he possessed the entire knowledge. But of the various pursuits which employed his studies for the last ten years of his life, none were so acceptable as those which explained the economy of Nature. For botany he acquired a taste of his uncle when young: and the exercise which, for the sake of improvement in this branch of the science, he induced

duced himself to take, contributed not a little to the preservation of his health. How considerable his improvements in it were, those only can tell who have seen his additions to Hudson, and his notes on Linnæus. While confined to zoology he successfully applied his discoveries to illustrate Aristotle and others of the Ancients. From engagements of this kind Mr. Gray's attention was neither often nor long diverted. Excepting the time he gave up to experiments on flowers, for the purpose of investigating the process of vegetation, (which can scarcely be called a relaxation from his stated occupation) his only amusement was musick; nor was his acquaintance with this art less than with others of much more importance. His skill was acquired from the productions of the best composers, out of whose works when in Italy he had made a selection. Vocal musick he chiefly preferred. The harpsichord was his favourite instrument, but though far from remarkable for a finished execution, yet he accommodated his voice so judiciously to his playing as to give an auditor considerable pleasure. His judgement in statuary and painting was exquisite, and formed from an almost instinctive perception of those graces beyond the reach of art in which the divine work of the great masters abound. As it was through the unsolicited favour of the Duke of Grafton that Mr. Gray was enabled to follow the bent of his own inclination in the choice of his studies, we shall not be surpris'd to find, from a letter to Dr. Beattie, that gratitude prompted him to offer his firstling;

O Meliboeë, Deus nobis hæc otia fecit
 Namque erit illi mihi semper Deus: illius aram
 Sæpe tener nostris ab ovilibus imbuet agnus.
 Ille meas errare boves ut cernis, et ipsum
 Ludere quæ vellem, calamo permisit agresti.

Accord.

Accordingly, on his Grace's being elected Chancellor of the University, Mr. Gray, unasked, took upon him to write those verses which are usually set to music on this occasion; and whatever the sarcastick Junius (notwithstanding his handsome compliment to the poet) might pretend, this was the offering of no venal Muse. The ode in its structure is dramattick, and it contains nothing of the complimentary kind which is not entirely suited to the characters employed. Not long after the bustle of the installation was over, Mr. Gray made an excursion to the sequestered lakes of Westmoreland and Cumberland. The impressions he there received from the wonderful scenery that every where surrounded him he transmitted to his friend Dr. Wharton, in epistolary journals, with all the wildness of Salvator and the softness of Claude. Writing in May 1771 to the same friend, he complains of a violent cough which had troubled him for three months, and which he called incurable, adding, that till this year he never knew what (mechanical) low spirits were. One circumstance that without doubt contributed to the latter complaint was the anxiety he felt from holding as a sinecure an office the duties of which he thought himself bound to perform. The object of his professorship being two-fold, and the patent allowing him to effect one of its designs by deputy, it is understood that he liberally rewarded for that purpose the teachers in the University of Italian and French. The other part he himself prepared to execute; but though the professorship was instituted in 1724, none of his predecessors had furnished a plan. Embarrassed by this and other difficulties, and retarded by ill health, the undertaking at length became so irksome, that he seriously proposed to relinquish the chair.— Towards the close of May he removed from Cambridge to town, after having suffered from flying attacks of an hereditary gout, to which he had long been subject, and from which a life of singular temperance could not protect him.

In London his indisposition having encreased, the physician advised him to change his lodgings in Jermyn-street for others at Kensington. This change was of so much benefit, that he was soon enabled to return to Cambridge, whence he meditated a journey to his friend Dr. Wharton, which he hoped might re-establish his health; but his intentions and hopes were delusive. On the 24th of July, 1771, a violent sickness came on him while at dinner in the College-hall; the gout had fixed on his stomach, and resisted all the power of medicine. On the 29th he was seized by a strong convulsion, which the next day returned with additional force, and the evening after he expired. At the first seizure he was aware of his danger, and though sensible at intervals almost to the last, he betrayed no dread of the terrors of death.

To delineate his portrait in this place would be needless. The reader will acquire the best idea of his character, if after perusing his life and his writings he will use his own memory as a cylindrical mirror, and collect into one assemblage the scattered features. Of Mr. Gray's religious opinions but little is known; there are however sufficient traces left to demonstrate him a sincere believer in the great truths of Christianity. To Lord Bolingbroke's atheism he hath written an answer. His sentiments of Lord Shaftesbury cannot be mistaken; and both Voltaire and Hume he censures with freedom. In private life he was most respected by those who best knew him: his heart was benevolent and his hand liberal.

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF

MR. THOMAS GRAY.

*Extracted from the registry of the Prerogative Court of
Canterbury.*

IN the name of God. *Amen.* I Thomas Gray of Pembroke-hall in the Univerfity of Cambridge, being of found mind and in good health of body, yet ignorant how long thefe bleffings may be indulged me, do make this my Laft Will and Teftament in manner and form following. Firft I do defire that my body may be depofited in the vault made by my late dear mother in the churchyard of Stoke-Pogeis, near Slough in Buckinghamfhire, by her remains, in a coffin of feafoned oak, neither lined nor covered, and (unlefs it be very inconvenient) I could wifh that one of my executors may fee me laid in the grave, and diftribute among fuch honeft and induftrious poor perfons in the faid parifh as he thinks fit the fum of ten pounds in charity.— Next, I give to George Williamfon, Efq; my fecond coufin by the father's fide, now of Calcutta in Bengal, the fum of five hundred pounds reduced Bank annuities, now ftanding in my name. I give to Anna Lady Goring, alfo my fecond coufin by the father's fide, of the county of Suffex, five hundred pounds reduced Bank annuities, and a pair of large blue and white old Japan china jars. *Item,* I give to Mary Antrobus of Cambridge fpinfter, my fecond coufin by the mother's fide, all that my freehold eftate and houfe in the parifh of St. Michael, Cornhill, London, now let at the yearly rent of fixty-five pounds, and in the occupation of Mr. Nortgeth perfumer, provided that ſhe pay

out of the said rent, by half-yearly payments, Mrs. Jane Olliffe, my aunt, of Cambridge, widow, the sum of twenty pounds *per annum* during her natural life; and after the decease of the said Jane Olliffe I give the said estate to the said Mary Antrobus, to have and to hold to her heirs and assigns for ever. Further, I bequeath to the said Mary Antrobus the sum of six hundred pounds new South-sea annuities, now standing in the joint names of Jane Olliffe and Thomas Gray, but charged with the payment of five pounds *per annum* to Graves Stokeley of Stoke-Pogeis in the county of Bucks, which sum of six hundred pounds, after the decease of the said annuitant, does (by the will of Anna Rogers my late aunt) belong solely and entirely to me, together with all overplus of interest in the mean-time accruing. Further if at the time of my decease there shall be any arrear of salary due to me from his Majesty's Treasury, I give all such arrears to the said Mary Antrobus. *Item*, I give to Mrs. Dorothy Comyns of Cambridge, my other second cousin by the mother's side, the sums of six hundred pounds old South-sea annuities, of three hundred pounds four *per cent.* Bank annuities consolidated, and of two hundred pounds three *per cent.* Bank annuities consolidated all now standing in my name. I give to Richard Stonehewer, Esq; one of his Majesty's Commissioners of Excise, the sum of five hundred pounds reduced Bank annuities, and I beg his acceptance of one of my diamond rings. I give to Dr. Thomas Wharton, of Old Park in the Bishoprick of Durham, five hundred pounds reduced Bank annuities, and desire him also to accept of one of my diamond rings. I give to my servant, Stephen Hempstead, the sum of fifty pounds reduced Bank annuities, and if he continues in my service to the time of my death I also give him all my wearing apparel and linen. I give to my two cousins above-mentioned, Mary Antrobus and Dorothy Comyns,

Comyns, all my plate, watches, rings, china-ware, bed linen and table linen, and the furniture of my chambers at Cambridge, not otherwise bequeathed, to be equally and amicably shared between them. I give to the Reverend William Mafon, Precentor of York, all my books, manuscripts, coins, musick printed or written, and papers of all kinds, to preserve or destroy at his own discretion. And after my just debts and the expences of my funeral are discharged, all the residue of my personal estate whatsoever I do hereby give and bequeath to the said Reverend William Mafon, and to the Reverend Mr. James Browne, President of Pembroke-hall, Cambridge, to be equally divided between them, desiring them to apply the sum of two hundred pounds to an use of charity concerning which I have already informed them. And I do hereby constitute and appoint them, the said William Mafon and James Browne, to be joint executors of this my Last Will and Testament. And if any relation of mine, or other legatee, shall go about to molest or commence any suit against my said executors in the execution of their office, I do, as far as the law will permit me, hereby revoke and make void all such bequests or legacies as I had given to that person or persons, and give it to be divided between my said executors and residuary legatees, whose integrity and kindness I have so long experienced, and who can best judge of my true intention and meaning. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 2d day of July, 1770. THO. GRAY.

Signed, sealed, published, and declared by the said Thomas Gray, the testator, as and for his Last Will and Testament, in the presence of us, who in his presence and at his request, and in the presence of each other, have signed our names as witnesses hereto.

RICHARD BAKER.

THOMAS WILSON.

JOSEPH TURNER.

Proved

Proved at London the 12th of August 1771, before the Worshipful Andrew Coltre Ducarel, Doctor of Laws and Surrogate, by the oaths of the Reverend William Mafon, Clerk, Master of Arts, and the Reverend James Browne, Clerk, Master of Arts, the executors, to whom administration was granted, having been first sworn duly to administer.

JOHN STEVENS.

HENRY STEVENS.

GEO. GOSTLING, jun.

} *Deputy Registers.*

P O E M S,

B Y

MR. GRAY.

O D E S.

O D E I.

ON THE SPRING.

LO! where the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
Fair Venus' train, appear;
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
And wake the purple year;
The Attick warbler pours her throat, 5
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,

B

The

The untaught harmony of Spring;
 While, whisp'ring pleasure as they fly,
 Cool zephyrs thro' the clear blue sky
 Their gather'd fragrance fling. 10

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
 A broader browner shade,
 Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
 O'er-canopies the glade,
 Beside some water's rushy brink 15
 With me the Muse shall sit, and think
 (At ease reclin'd in rustick state)
 How vain the ardour of the crowd!
 How low, how little, are the proud!
 How indigent the great! 20

Still is the toiling hand of Care,
 The panting herds repose,
 Yet hark! how thro' the peopled air
 The busy murmur glows!
 The insect youth are on the wing, 25
 Eager to taste the honied Spring,
 And float amid the liquid noon;
 Some lightly o'er the current skim,
 Some shew their gaily-gilded trim,
 Quick-glancing to the sun, 30

To

'To Contemplation's sober eye,
 Such is the race of man :
 And they that creep, and they that fly,
 Shall end where they began.
 Alike the busy and the gay 35
 But flutter thro' life's little day,
 In Fortune's varying colours drest :
 Brush'd by the hand of rough Mischance,
 Or chill'd by Age, their airy dance
 They leave, in dust to rest. 40

Methinks I hear, in accents low,
 The sportive kind reply :
 Poor Moralist ! and what art thou ?
 A solitary fly !
 Thy joys no glitt'ring female meets, 45
 No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
 No painted plumage to display ;
 On hasty wings thy youth is flown,
 Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone—
 We frolick while 'tis May. 50

N O T E S,

O N T H E

O D E O N S P R I N G .

IN direct opposition to the malicious suggestions of arrogant and tasteless criticism, I make no scruple to pronounce this *Ode on Spring* by far the choicest specimen of *classical* composition that modern times can produce. It is indeed an epitome of every thing beautiful upon this subject; a collection of sweets from the blossoms of poetry in the extensive garden of the *Muses*. The *versification* is highly correct and sweetly musical; the *language* glows with all the warmth and beauty of the season which it paints; and the *sentiments* are at once unaffected, instructive, and sublime. In short, the first excellencies of poetry are united in this little ode; which has this criterion of merit, in common with the other poems of *Mr. Gray*, that the more it is contemplated, it will please the more; and will rise in beauty, in proportion to our acquaintance with the best models of antiquity.

Verse 1. The rosy-bosom'd Hours:

“ The *rosy-bosom'd* Spring:

“ To weeping Fancy pines.”

Thomson's Spring, v. 1007.

But there is a particular allusion to a passage in *Milton's Comus*, in my judgement the most beautiful and perfect poem of that sublime genius.

“ Along

- “ Along the crisped shades and bow’rs,
 “ Revels the spruce and jocund Spring,
 “ The Graces and the rosy-bosom’d Hours
 “ Thither all their bounties bring;
 “ There eternal Summer dwells,
 “ And west-winds, with musky wing,
 “ About the cedar’n-alleys fling
 “ Nard and Cassia’s balmy smells.”

Ver. 984.

It is observable that the epithet *rosy-bosom’d* is employed by these poets, with unusual latitude, to signify, *with bosoms full of roses*; very differently from the *ῥοδοδάκτυλῳ Ἥραις* of Homer, and the *rosy-finger’d morn* of Milton.

Poetry has made the *rose* a constant attendant on the *Spring*: “*Vere rosam fundi:*” *Lucret.* “*Primus vere rosam:*” *Virg.* And Thomson thus charmingly introduces his finest poem:

- “ Come, gentle Spring! ethereal mildness! come;
 “ And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
 “ While music wakes around, veil’d in a shower
 “ Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.”

Hours. This application of the Hours—the *Ἥραις* of the Greeks, is conceived in the genuine spirit of ancient poetry. Nonnus has two verses worth quoting on this occasion.

Θυγαῖρες λυκαβαίῃσι ἀελλοπόδοιο τοκῆσι
 Εἰς δομον ἠθεοιο ῥοδοπέδις ἦεν Ἥραι.

With *rosy-blooming* face the *Hours* appear,
 The daughters of the tempest-footed year.

A fine

A fine fragment of Pindar, preserved by Dionysius Halicarnassensis, *de Struct. Orat.* could not escape the excursive eye of our judicious poet.

Μαίη

Ου λανθάνει Φοινικῶν ἔργῳ
 Ὅπῳ οἰχθινῶν Ὠραὶ θάλαμον,
 Εὐδομον ἐπαΐωσιν ἐπερ
 Φύλα νεκταρία.

When the gay *Hours* unfold their stores,
 The poet's curious eye explores
 Where, list'ning to the breath of *Spring*,
 The nectar'd flow'rs their *fragrance* fling.

Verse 2. Fair Venus' train.

Venus is here employed, in conformity to the mythology of the Greeks, as the source of *creation* and *beauty*—as the principle that pervades and invigorates *universal nature*: and with peculiar propriety on this occasion, because a *new creation*, as it were, takes place with the commencement of the Spring, after the languor and inactivity of Winter. The elegance of Mr. Gray's taste, and the accuracy of his learning, are conspicuous at all times.—A fragment of Euripides in Athenæus contains the mythological idea.

Τὴν Ἀφροδίτην ἔχ' ὄρας ἔση θεῶν;—
 Αὐτὴ τρέφει σὶ, κάμει, καὶ παλίας ἑρόλης.—
 Ἐστ' μὲν ὀμβρῶν γαί, ὅταν ξηροὶ πεδοὶ
 Ἀκαρποὶ αὐχμῶν, ἰσίδῳ ἐπιδως ἔχει·
 Ἐστ' δ' ὅ σιμαῖῳ ἕρανῳ, πληρωμῆῳ
 Ὀμβρῶν, πῖσιν εἰς γαίαν Ἀφροδίτης ὑπο.
 Ὅταν δὲ συμμιχθῆλον εἰς πάλιν δυα
 Φυβσιν ἡμῖν παλῖα καὶ τρέφουσ' ἄμα,
 Δι' ἂν βροτοῖσι ξη τὶ καὶ θάλλαι γίνῃ

And

And Æschylus introduces Venus thus displaying her own dignity and importance, in a fragment preserved by the same author.

Ἐρα μιν ἀγνῶ· ἕραν· τρωσαι χθονα,
 Ἐρως δὲ γαίαν λαμβάνει γαμῶ τυχαίῃ·
 Οὐρανῶ· ὄσπ' ἰναίει· ἕραν πρῶτον
 Ἐκυσσε γαίαν ἢ δὲ τιχίλειαι βροτοῖς
 Μηλωντε βοσκῆς κ' ἑῖον Δημητρίον.
 Δανδρων δὲ τις ὄρα ἐκ νότιον· γαμῶ
 Τελειῶ· ἔστι· πῶν δ' ἔγω παναμί·

The heav'n enamour'd rains upon the earth,
 The earth with joy the fertile boon receives
 Impregnated, and teeming forth in flowers,
 In corn, and fruits, and trees, and living things,
 I Venus of this produce am the cause.

Καλεῖται δὲ ἡ Ἀφροδίτη παναίτιη, δια το κρῖν τῶ ἕραν κ' ἐν τῇ γῆ
 κ' θάλασσῃ τὴν δύναμιν αὐτῆς διειροσθῆναι.—

Venus is stiled the *universal cause*, inasmuch as her energy is visible even in the heavens, the earth, and the sea.—
Phornut. de Nat. Deor.

The same idea is briefly and elegantly expressed by Euripides, in his Hippolytus:

Φοῖβα δ' ἐν αἰθέρι· ἔστι δ' ἐν θάλασσῃ
 Κλυδῶνι κυπρῆς· πᾶσι δ' ἐκ ταύτης ἔφυ.
Ver. 447.

Venus, the source of all created things,
 Pervades the air, and fills the vast abyss.

But these sentiments are exhibited with considerable variety, and ennobled with all the grandeur and embellishments of poetry, by the sublime Lucretius, in the *exordium* to his admirable poem on *The Nature of Things*; in
which

which there are many passages, in spite of the obscurity and untowardness of his subject, that claim a rank amongst the noblest effusions of poetical inspiration. An edition of the poetical parts of his work, unincumbered by his *philosophy* and *metaphysics*, would be an useful work, and I have sometimes entertained thoughts of presenting it to the public.

Verse 3. Call forth the long-expecting flowers.

“ In that soft season, when descending showers
 “ *Call forth* the greens, and *wake* the rising flowers;
 “ When opening buds salute the welcome day,
 “ And earth relenting feels the genial ray.”

Temple of Fame.

The conclusion of which poem is uncommonly beautiful, and highly honourable to the author's feelings. Mr. Pope's maturer years never produced a more delightful piece of genuine poetry.

A lover of the incomparable Georgics will be reminded by the last verse of this beautiful quotation, of

“ Zephyro putris se gleba resolvit :”

The clods relent

Mouldering before the breeze.

Verse 4. The purple year.

“ ——— Vere rubenti.”

Virg. Geo. ii. 319.

Verse 5. The Attick warbler—

Here is a faint allusion to an ode in Horace on the Spring, addressed to Virgil:

“ Nidum

- “ Nidum ponit Ityn flebiliter gemens
 “ Infelix avis, et Cecropiæ domus
 “ Æternum opprobrium.”

And in several parts of his first stanza may be discovered a general resemblance to Milton's sonnet on the *nightingale*.

- “ O! *nightingale*, that on yon blooming spray
 “ Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
 “ Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
 “ While *the jolly Hours* lead on propitious May.
 “ First heard before the shallow *cuckoo's* bill,
 “ Portend success in love.”

The whole of this little sonnet is worthy of it's author; but the fifth verse is exquisitely beautiful,

—————Pours her throat.

This is a very bold and poetical expression, and an admirable improvement of the original form in the Greek and Roman classics.

—————*χίτων αυδης*: *Hes. Scut. Herc.* 396.

“ —————suaves ex ore loquelas

“ *Funde.*” *Lucret.* i. 40.

Our poet is not inferior to Milton himself, even when the sublime bard exerts his powers with the most success, on a favourite subject:

“ —————where the Attic bird

“ Trills her thick-warbled notes the Summer long.”

Par. Reg. iv. 245.

Verse 8. —Whispering pleasure.

For this beauty our poet is indebted to a passage in the

Paradise Lost, which, for the grandeur of the *personification*, and a happy union of *sublimity* and *sweetness*, has, perhaps, no equal, and cannot be excelled.

- “ ————— Now gentle gales
 “ Fanning their odoriferous wings, disperse
 “ Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
 “ Those balmy spoils. As when to them, who sail
 “ Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
 “ Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
 “ Sabæan odours from the spicy shore
 “ Of Araby the blest; with such delay
 “ Well-pleas'd they slack their course, and many a league
 “ Cheer'd with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles.”

iv. 156.

The former part of this quotation has a faint resemblance to some fine lines of Pindar:

—————ινθα μακρων

Νασον Ωκιανιδεσ

Αυραι περιπνευσιν.

Ol. ii.

And the latter poet is delineated from Diodorus Siculis; *faint*
 so various was the erudition of our great poet!

Ουδη γαρ εξαριθμησασθαι δυναλον τας ικασων ιδιοτητας τε κ' φυσικας, δια το πληθ^{ος} κ' την υπερβολην της εκ παντων αδραιζομενης αδησ. Θεα γαρ τισ φαινεται κ' λογε κρειττων η προσπιπυσσα κ' κινωσα τας ικασων αισθησεις ευωδια. Και γαρ της παραπλευσιας, καιτις πολυ της χρισου κειχωρισμενης, εκ αμοιρας ποιει της τοιαυτης απολαυστικας. Καλω γαρ την εαρινην αραν, διαν ανεμ^{ος} απογε^{ος} γηνηται, συμβαινει τας απο των σμυρνοφορων δενδρων κ' των αλλων των τοις ιων αποπιπτομενικς ευωδιας διικνεσθαι πρ^{ος} τα πλησιον μερη της θαλασσης. L. iii. 46.

“ So numerous and powerful are the collective scents
 “ from these aromatic plants in Sabæa, or Arabia-Felix,
 “ that

“ that an enumeration of all their properties is impracticable. A divine and inexpressible fragrance strikes upon the senses; not unenjoyed even by the navigator, though he sails by at a great distance from the shore. For in the Spring, when the wind blows off land, the odour from the aromatic trees and plants diffuses itself over all the neighbouring sea.”

Verse 9. Cool Zephyrs—

Lucretius presents us with a most elegant and picturesque description, containing an animated groupe of images, worthy, I should think, of the painter's notice; which was not unadverted to by Mr. Gray.

“ It Ver, et Venus, et Veneris prænunciis ante
 “ Pinnatus graditur Zephyrus vestigia propter:
 “ Flora quibus mater præspersgens ante viai
 “ Cuncta coloribus egregiis et odoribus opplet.” *V. 736.*
 The *Spring*, and *Venus*, and their harbinger
 The *winged Zephyr* near-attendant comes:
 The matron-goddess *Flora* strews their way
 With *odorous sweets* and flowers of every hue.

Poetry never produced a more delightful picture. There is, however, a correspondent passage in Milton, well worthy of appearing in such company.

“ The birds their quire apply: *airs, vernal airs,*
 “ Breathing the *smell* of field and grove, attune
 “ The trembling leaves; while universal Pan
 “ Knit with the *Graces* and the *Flours* in dance
 “ Led on th' eternal *Spring*.” *Par. Lost, iv. 264.*

What an exquisite feast are these fruits of genius to a reader of taste and sensibility!—The great poet had his eye on Horace:

“ Gratia cum nymphis geminisque fororibus audet
 “ Ducere nuda choros.”

The Graces and the Nymphs lead on the dance
 In naked Beauty's bloom.

Verse 11. Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch—

The beginning of this stanza has some resemblance to a charming passage in the divine Lucretius, whose poetical powers are at least equal to those of any of the ancients.

“ Attamen inter se prostrati in gramine molli,
 “ Propter aquæ rivum, sub ramis arboris altæ.
 “ Non magnis opibus jucunde corpora curant :
 “ Præfertim cum tempestas arridet, et anni
 “ Tempora conspergunt viridantes floribus herbas.”

Lib. ii. 29.

Beside some *water's brink reclin'd*, beneath
 The *spreading favour* of th' aerial *tree*,
 They taste sweet blifs without *the glare of wealth* :
 But chief in that soft season when the *Spring*
 Smiles, and enamels the 'green earth with flowers.

Verse 12. — Browner shade.

“ And breathes a *browner* horror on the woods ;”
 says Mr. Pope in the first of poems, his *Eloisa*.

Verse 14. O'er-canopiés the glade.

“ _____ a bank
 “ *O'er-canopied* with luscious woodbine.”

Shakesp. Midf. Night's Dream.—Gray.

But a more particular allusion seems to have been made to some delicious lines of Milton :

“ I sat

" I *sat* me down to watch upon a *bank*
 " With ivy *canopied*, and interwove
 " With flaunting honey-suckle; and began,
 " Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
 " To *meditate* my *rural* minstrelsy,
 " Till fancy had her fill." *Comus*, 543.

Which perhaps will recal to the reader's mind a sweet passage of that benevolent man and genuine poet, Thomson.

" ————— Nor in the bower
 " Where *woodbines* *flaunt* and roses shed a couch,
 " While evening draws her crimson curtains round,
 " Trust your soft minutes with betraying man."
Spring, 976.

It is not easy to say, whether this pathetic admonition does more honour to his feelings or to his genius.

Verse 15. —Some water's rushy brink.
 " *Mincius* et *tenera* *prætexit* *arundine* *ripas.*" *Virg.*
 " Smooth-sliding *Mincius*, crown'd with vocal reeds."
Lycidas.

Or, as Milton says of that stream with which Mr. Gray was more particularly conversant:

" *Jam* neque *arundineum* *mihi* *cura* *revifere* *Camum.*"

Verse 22. The panting herds repose.
 " ————*patula* *pecus* *omne* *sub* *ulmo* *est.*" *Perf. Sat.*
 " O'erpower'd with heat, the panting flocks are laid
 " Beneath the friendly elm's refreshing shade." *Brewster.*

Verse 24. The busy murmur glows—
 A vivid expression; like the *legiones—classem—opus*
 FERVERE

FERVERE of Lucretius and Virgil. Mr. Thomson has some passages like this before us :

- “ Here their delicious task the *fervent* bees,
 “ In swarming millions, tend: around, atlast,
 “ Thro’ the soft air the *busy* nations fly.” *Spring*, 506.
 “ ————— Now ’tis nought
 “ But restless hurry through the *busy* air,
 “ Beat by unnumber’d wings.” *Ver.* 649.

which last is from Milton :

- “ ————— The air
 “ Flotes, as they pass, fann’d with unnumber’d plumes.”
Par. Lost. vii. 431.

Verse 26. The honied Spring——

- “ While the bee with *honied* thigh.” *Il Penf.*
 “ That on the green turf suck the *honied* flowers.”
Lycidas.
 “ ————— The bait of *honied* words.” *Samf. Agon.*

Verse 27. And float amid the liquid noon.

- “ Nare per æstatem liquidam.” *Virg. Geo.* iv.—*Gray.*
 Thomson finely says, in the same metaphor,
 “ ————— The steep-ascending eagle soars
 “ With upward pinions through the *flood of day.*”
Summer, 608.

Verse 28. Some lightly o’er the current skim.

This description is highly animated and picturesque; and seems partly adumbrated from a beautiful passage in Thomson’s *Summer* :

- “ Wak’d by his warmer ray, the reptile young
 “ Come *wing’d* abroad ;—by myriads forth at once
 “ Swarming they pour; of all the varied hues
 “ Their

- “ Their beauty-beaming parents can disclose.
 “ Ten thousand forms, ten thousand different tribes,
 “ *People* the blaze. To sunny waters some
 “ By fatal instinct fly, where on the pool
 “ They sportive wheel.” *Verse 241.*

Mr. Gray's—*insect youth*—is much more elegant than Thomson's—*reptile young*: but *the peopled air* is surpassed in grandeur by—*people the blaze*. Between—*Some lightly o'er the current skim*—and—*On the pool they sportive wheel*—it is not easy to decide.

Verse 29. Some shew their gaily-gilded trim,
 Quick-glancing to the sun.

- “ —————Sporting with *quick glance*
 “ Shew to the sun their wavy'd coats drop'd with gold.”
Par. Lost. vii.—Gray.
 “ —————Pennisque coruscant.” *Virg. Geo.*

And Thomson, with scarce less elegance:

- “ Till, in the western sky, the downward sun
 “ Looks out effulgent, from amid the flush
 “ Of broken clouds, *gay-shifting to his beam.*”
Spring, 189.

Verse 21. To Contemplation's sober eye.

- “ While insects from the threshold preach,” &c.
Mr. Green in the Grotto, Dodg. Miscel. vol. v. p. 161.
 —Gray.

Contemplation, invited by the busy hum of the surrounding multitudes.

- “ There flowery hill *Hymettus* with the sound
 “ Of bees' industrious murmur oft invites
 “ To studious musing.” *Par. Reg. iv. 247.*

In the *second* of these verses we may observe an elision similar to that at the beginning of this ode :

Fair Venus' train appear :

which is somewhat harsh indeed, but unavoidable in words of such a termination.

I will venture to affirm, that this stanza furnishes the most curious specimen of a *continued metaphor*—the happiest intermixture of the *simile* and the *subject*—that the whole compass of poetry, ancient and modern, can produce.

To Contemplation's sober eye

Such is the race of man :

And they that *creep*, and they that *fly*,
Shall end where they began.

Alike the *busy* and the *gay*,

But *flutter* through *life's little day*,

In Fortune's *varying colours drest* :

Brush'd by the hand of *rough Mischance*,

Or *chill'd* by *Age*, their *airy dance*

They leave, in dust to rest.

Life's little day—the *Ephemeras* of the *Naturalists*, and the *εφημεριοι*—i. e.—*ανθρωποι*—*men*—of *Æschylus*.

Varying colours—"Spartique coloribus alas." *Virg.*—
"Variantesque colores." *Lucret.*

It is, however, an act of justice to Thomson, to acknowledge, that Mr. Gray is indebted to him on this occasion; though the original, grand and beautiful as it is, must, in my opinion, yield to the imitation. When Mr. Gray condescends to imitate, he recovers his level at least by some new thoughts, some dignity of verse, or some luminous embellishments of diction.

"Thick

“ Thick in yon *stream of light*, a thousand ways,
 “ Upward and downward, thwarting and convolv'd,
 “ The *quivering nations sport*: 'till, tempest-wing'd,
 “ Fierce *Winter* sweeps them from the face of day.
 “ E'en so luxurious *men*, unheeding, pass
 “ An idle *Summer-life* in *Fortune's shine*,
 “ A *season's glitter!* thus they flutter on
 “ From toy to toy, from vanity to vice!
 “ Till *blown away* by *Death*, *Oblivion* comes
 “ Behind, and strikes them from the book of life.”

Summer, 342.

Verse 44. A solitary fly!

Very emphatical and concise! But a fly, and a fly in solitude!

“ ————— In solitude
 “ What happiness who can enjoy alone,
 “ Or, all-enjoying, what contentment find?”

Par. Lost.

Verse 47. No painted plumage——

“ ————— Pictæque volucres.” *Virg.*
 “ From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
 “ Solac'd the woods, and spread their *painted wings.*”

P. Lost, vii.

Verse 49. Thy sun is set.

————— παρ' ἄλιον αἴμι δίδυκον. *Theoc. Id. i.*

After so particular an illustration of the beauties of this Ode, it will not be amiss to take some notice of *Dr. Johnson's* animadversions on it. If a vigorous understanding,

a comprehensive knowledge, and a capacity of sound judgement, were sufficient qualifications for a work of genuine criticism, no man was ever better furnished than he for such an undertaking. But a certain inelegance of taste, a frigid churlishness of temper, unsubdued and unqualified by that melting sensibility, that divine enthusiasm of soul, which are essential to a hearty relish of poetical composition; and, above all, an invidious depravity of mind, warped by the most unmanly prejudices, and operating in an unrelenting antipathy to cotemporary mérit, too often counteracted and corrupted the other virtues of his intellect. Nor am I under any apprehension of being charged with an unjustifiable partiality in this opinion of him, when I make no scruple to declare, that, notwithstanding some very exceptionable passages, infinitely disgraceful both to his understanding and his heart, I esteem his *Lives of the English Poets* to be the noblest specimen of entertaining and solid criticism, that modern times have produced; well worthy of ranking on the same shelf with the most distinguished of the ancients, *Aristotle* and *Quintilian*.

“ His Ode on *Spring*,” says our contemptuous critic, “ has *something* poetical, both in the language and the thought; but the language is too luxuriant, and the thoughts have nothing new.”

One hardly knows which to admire most in this concise decision; the parsimonious commendation, *something poetical*, or the jealousy that immediately qualifies the involuntary and precipitate liberality of his concession.— We can only appeal to the *Ode* itself, and to the taste and discernment of those, who, as *Milton* speaks, have ears to
raptures

rapture: for general and indiscriminating censure will admit no confutation.

“ There has of *late*,” continues our *biographer*, “ arisen a practice of giving to adjectives, derived from substantives, the termination of the participles; such as the *cultured plain*, the *daisied bank*: but I was sorry to see in the *lines* of a scholar like Gray, the *honied Spring*.”

My note upon the verse in question will shew, that this mode of expression is no such *novelty* as our critic would insinuate; and that no admirer of a *scholar like Gray* has any occasion to sympathize in the benevolent sorrows of *Dr. Johnson* for the error and unskilfulness of his favourite author. Every language is enriched and improved by the introduction of words of so easy a derivation as that in dispute; and such a coinage, by the unanimous concurrence of critics in all ages, will readily pass current with the stamp of poetry upon it. The *Latin* word *mellitus*, for example, seems to be exactly similar: an *adjective* derived from a *substantive* with the signification and the termination of a *participle*.

O D E II.

ON THE DEATH OF A

FAVOURITE CAT,

Drowned in a TUB of GOLD FISHER.

'T WAS on a lofty vase's side,
 Where China's gayest art had dy'd
 The azure flowers that blow;
 Demurest of the tabby kind,
 The pensive Selima reclin'd,
 Gaz'd on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declar'd;
 The fair round face, the snowy beard,
 The velvet of her paws,
 Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
 Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
 She saw; and purr'd applause.

Still

Still had she gaz'd; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream:
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
'Thro' richest purple to the view
Betray'd a golden gleam.

The hapless Nymph with wonder saw:
A whisker first and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,
She stretch'd in vain to reach the prize.
What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous Maid! with looks intent
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant fate sat by, and smil'd)
The slipp'ry verge her feet beguil'd,
She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood
She mew'd to ev'ry wat'ry God,
Some speedy aid to send:

No

No Dolpin came, no Nereid flirr'd:
Nor cruel *Tom*, nor *Susan* heard.
A Fav'rite has no friend!

From hence, ye Beauties undeceiv'd,
Know, one false step is ne'er retriev'd,
And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize;
Nor all that glisters gold.

NOTES

N O T E S

O N

O D E II.

ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT.

THIS Ode is beyond all dispute the least excellent of *Mr. Gray's* productions: but the cause of this inferiority must be sought for in the tenuity of the subject, which was incapable of great things; and not in the meanness of *it's* execution, or the imbecillity of *his* genius. A gaiety of imagination, and a sprightliness of humour, invested with melodious verse and elegant expression, are *it's* undoubted recommendations: and of what other excellence was such a simple event susceptible?

Verse 3. The azure flowers that blow.

This is, perhaps, the only redundancy that the most scrupulous examiner would be able to detect in the poetry of *Mr. Gray*. For, *the flowers that blow*, if intended in contradistinction to *flowers unblown*, or *in the bud*—is a trivial and unmeaning thought. *Milton* acquits himself with much more happiness and dexterity;

“ Iris there with humid bow

“ Waters the odorous banks, *that blow*

“ *Flowers* of more mingled hue,

“ Than her purpled scarf can shew,” *Comus*, 992.

Mr. Gray

Mr. Gray might have said with elegance and propriety,
The flowers of azure blow.

But, where is that author to be found, whose works will stand the test of such a minute and rigorous scrutiny?

Verse 6. Gaz'd on the lake below.

It is a proof of no ordinary skill thus to confer dignity on so trivial a subject: and the same dexterity is conspicuous throughout the Ode. A happy exertion of this talent has eminently distinguished *Virgil*, *Boileau*, and *Pope*.

Verse 7. Her conscious tail.

The accuracy and elegance of the description in this stanza must be universally allowed: and the difficulty of such description is always proportionate to the simplicity and notoriety of the subject.

—————Sibi quivis

“ Sperat idem; fudet multum frustra que laboret,
 “ Aufus idem.”

Verse 13. Still had she gaz'd——

I will not take upon me to decide between the fine fancy and the delicately curious expression of this stanza. They are both admirable in their kind, and cannot be exceeded.

Verse 16. Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
 Through richest purple to the view
 Betray'd a golden gleam.

A selection of exquisite terms, combined with singular felicity! *Milton* expresses a similar idea with great success,

“ The

“ The field all iron *cast a gleaming brown.*”

Par. Reg. iii. 326.

“ ————— *fluctuat omnis*

“ *Ære renidenti tellus.*” *Virg. Geor. ii.*

But *Mr. Gray* had in his eye a beautiful description of a flower in the *Georgics* :

“ *Aureus ipse ; sed in foliis, quæ plurima circum*

“ *Funduntur, violæ subluceat purpura nigræ.*” *iv. 274.*

Itself of *golden hue* ; but the thick leaves

Through a dark violet shoot a *purple gleam.*

I should not obtrude my own version of these passages upon the reader, were not our poetical translations generally execrable to the last degree.

Verse 19. The hapless nymph——

Impartiality obliges us to acknowledge, that this and the concluding stanza are very much inferior to the rest of the Ode, and altogether unworthy of the elegance and taste of *Mr. Gray*.

Verse 25. Presumptuous maid——

This stanza will almost compensate the mediocrity of the preceding. That idea of “ *Malignant Fate* sat by “ and *smil'd,*” is finely imagined, and extremely poetical.

Verse 31. Eight times——

A humorous allusion to the vulgar notion of a cat's *vivacity.* *Mr. Bourne*, whose elegiac poetry is the sweetest of any in the *Latin* language, has a pretty *Epigram* upon this subject.

DEFENDIT NUMERUS.

- “ Blandior indulſit, felis, tibi parca; novena
 “ Nam tibi net Lachefis fila novena colo.
 “ Hinc, ſi miſſa voles celfi de culmine teſti,
 “ Decidis in tutos præcipitata pedes.
 “ Nec miſeram, licet infeſtent laniique canefque,
 “ Te laniæ exanimant, exanimantve canes.
 “ Si moriari ſemel, ſi bis, ſi terve, quaterve,
 “ Plusquam dimidia parte ſuperſtes eris.”

To all the tabby kind alone

Fate has a partial kindneſs ſhown.

Their thread to thrice three lengths is run;

Their life on thrice three ſpindles ſpun.

Is Puſs thrown headlong to the ſtreet

From a houſe-top? She finds her feet.

Should butchers and their curs annoy her?

Nor butchers nor their curs deſtroy her.

Should ſhe loſe three or e'en four lives?

By more than half ſhe ſtill ſurvives.

Verſe 32. She mew'd—

As *Mr. Bourne* moſt beautifully ſays of the *Lion*, ſup-
 plicating the aſſiſtance of *Androcles*,

“ —————Miferabile murmur

“ Edens, qua poterat voce, precatur opem.”

Verſe 34. No Dolphin came—

Alluding to the ſtory of *Arion*, related by *Herodotus*; who was compelled by the mariners to throw himſelf into the ſea, and was conveyed on the back of a *dolphin* ſafe to land. *Clio*, 24.

Verſe

Verse 37. From hence—

This is a grammatical impropriety perpetually found in our best *English* writers, ancient and modern. *Hence* is, *from this*; and *thence*, *from that*: therefore *from hence*, and *from thence*—are downright nonsense.

For the entertainment of the classical reader, I will subjoin another *Epigram* from *Mr. Bourne*; which is excellently descriptive, and will bear a comparison with the second stanza of this Ode.

IDEM AGIT IDEM.

- “ Felicula ad speculum saltu lasciviv herile,
 “ Lascivam saltu feliculamqne videt.
 “ Nigra videt nigram; bicolor naso, bicolorem;
 “ Glaucaque torquentem lumina, glauca tuens.
 “ Et sociam ad lusus lentæ incurvamine caudæ
 “ Provocat, et lepidi mobilitate pedis.
 “ Utraque utramque laceffit, et utraque palpat utramque;
 “ Et molle oppositos explicat unguiculos.
 “ Jam tumet in tergum, et simulatas expuit iras;
 “ Et tumet, et similes expuit umbra minas.
 “ Quænam hæc sit, mima unde sui tam mîmica, quærit
 “ Felis; an in speculo, post speculumne, fiet.
 “ Te quoque, præsentem præsens, quam quæris, et illa
 “ Quærit, an in speculo, post speculumne, fiet.
 “ Alterutra alterutram quæritque et decipit, idque
 “ Feliculæ facitis, quod facis una, duæ.”

Dr. Johnson's strictures upon this Ode are much more just than any of his other observations on our poet.—“ In the first stanza,” says he, “ the azure flowers that blow, shew resolutely a rhyme is sometimes made when it can-

28 ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT.

“not easily be found.” This is too true; and I had passed the same censure, before I knew of this coincidence. Our critic, however, exposes himself to reproof from the manner in which he has conveyed his severe remark: *shew a rhyme is sometimes made.* This omission of the *relative*, a too common practice with our writers! is an impropriety of the grossest kind: and which *neither gods nor men*, as one expresses himself, nor any language under heaven, can endure.

The rest of his strictures it were painful to transcribe, and vain to contradict:

If wrong we kiss the rod.

The Ode upon the whole is certainly a pleasing effusion of a sportive fancy; but will not bear the probe of a fastidious and angry critic. Criticism, indeed, does but disgrace herself by assailing such a *bagatelle*. It is an eagle stooping to a sparrow, or a lion roaring at a frog.

ODE

O D E III.

ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF

E T O N C O L L E G E.

Ἄθροπος ἱκανὴ πρέφασις εἰς τὸ ἀνευχεῖν.

MENANDER.

YE distant spires, ye antique towers,
 That crown the wat'ry glade,
 Where grateful Science still adores
 Her HENRY'S* holy Shade;
 And ye, that from the stately brow
 Of WINDSOR'S heights th' expanse below
 Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,

* King HENRY VI. Founder of the College.

Whose

Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way.

Ah happy hills, ah pleasing shade,
Ah fields belov'd in vain,
Where once my careless childhood stray'd
A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to sooth,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.

Say, Father THAMES, for thou hast seen
Full many a sprightly race
Disporting on thy margin green
The paths of pleasure trace,
Who foremost now delight to cleave
With pliant arm thy glassy wave?
The captive linnet which enthrall?
What idle progeny succeed
To chase the rolling circle's speed,
Or urge the flying ball?

While

While some on earnest business bent
Their murmur'ing labours ply
'Gainst graver hours, that bring constraint
To sweeten liberty:
Some bold adventurers disdain
The limits of their little reign,
And unknown regions dare descry:
Still as they run they look behind,
They hear a voice in every wind,
And snatch a fearful joy.

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,
Less pleasing when possess'd;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
The sunshine of the breast:
Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever-new,
And lively cheer of vigour born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
That fly th' approach of morn.

Alas, regardless of their doom,
The little victims play!

No

No sense have they of ills to come,
 Nor care beyond to-day:
 Yet see how all around 'em wait
 The Ministers of human fate,
 And black Misfortune's baleful train!
 Ah, shew them where in ambush stand
 To seize their prey the murth'rous band!
 Ah, tell them they are men!

These shall the fury Passions tear,
 The vultures of the mind,
 Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
 And Shame that sculks behind;
 Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
 Or Jealousy with rankling tooth,
 That inly gnaws the secret heart,
 And Envy wan, and faded Care,
 Grim-visag'd comfortless Despair,
 And Sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
 Then whirl the wretch from high,
 To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
 And grinning Infamy.

The

The stings of Falsehood those shall try,
And hard Unkindness' alter'd eye,
That mocks the tear it forc'd to flow;
And keen Remorse with blood defil'd,
And moody Madness laughing wild
Amid severest woe.

Lo, in the vale of years beneath
A grisly troop are seen,
The painful family of Death,
More hideous than their Queen:
This racks the joints, this fires the veins,
That every labouring sinew strains,
Those in the deeper vitals rage:
Lo, Poverty, to fill the band,
That numbs the soul with icy hand,
And slow-consuming Age.

To each his suff'rings: all are men,
Condemn'd alike to groan;
The tender for another's pain,
Th' unfeeling for his own.

F

Yet,

Yet, ah! why should they know their fate?
Since sorrow never comes too late,
And happiness too swiftly flies.
Thought would destroy their paradise,
No more; where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise.

NOTES

N O T E S

O N

O D E III.

ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE.

THIS Ode, we are told, was the first poetical production of Mr. Gray, that appeared in public. That air of pensive melancholy, which breathes throughout the piece, and is in unison with the feelings of so many readers; renders it the most pleasing, perhaps, of all his poems, his *Elegy* alone excepted, which in this respect, like *Achilles*, has no rival. The composition now before us is indeed the effusion of a delicate and cultivated mind, tenderly impressed with the soft sensations of compassion and benevolence. As a *descriptive* composition and a delineation of the human passions, it may justly claim, I think, a superiority above all his poems. We are informed, that Mr. Walpole was so sensible of it's peculiar excellence as a *first* production, that, with a propriety and pertinency, that do honour to his taste, he applied to his friend this verse of *Lucan*:

"Nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre:"

Phorſ. x. 296.

The nations see not Nile a trivial stream.

The Greek motto to this Ode——

Ἀνθρώπος ἰκανὴν ἀποφασίς εἰς τὸ δυσχερὲν. MENANDER.

has puzzled, I dare say, many readers not deficient in ancient learning; and has excited in their minds some dissatisfaction with their own acquirements, which did not enable them to apprehend a maxim of so clear a writer as *Menander*: when employed too as a motto; which usually is, and always should be, as obvious as possible. The verse is indeed obscure; and therefore the prefixing of it to this poem favours of an affectation, unbecoming a man of learning; and especially, as so many moral *sentences*, equally pertinent and more perspicuous, might easily have been found. Conversant, as I may deem myself to be, in the *Greek* language, I am not quite sure, that I have a distinct apprehension of it's meaning. For the satisfaction, however, of the generality of *Mr. Gray's* admirers, I will propose what seems to be the sense of the words in a literal translation:

Man is an abundant subject of calamity.

Verse 1. Ye distant spires——

This introductory address to *Eton College* is poetical and picturesque; and so natural, as to have all the appearance of being suggested at the time of an actual prospect of the place, and a contemplation of the scenes described. It is embellished too with all that sweetness and gracefulness of diction, which is *Mr. Gray's* distinguishing excellence. And yet, upon a nicer consideration, I discover a capital defect in this stanza. These *spires* and *towers* are addressed by the poet without any use or intention; for
nothing

nothing is afterwards asserted of them, and they are introduced only to be dismissed in silence and without further notice. *The Towers of London* in the *second Epode* of the *Bard* are not apostrophized with so little meaning; but are treated with the importance of reasonable agents, as the congruity of the figure required.

We may compare a passage of *Milton* with the two first lines of this poem:

“ With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,
“ Turrets and terraces, and glittering spires:”

Par. Reg. iv. 53.

Verse 4. Her Henry's holy shade;

King *Henry* the *sixth*, founder of the college. *Gray*.
He styles him *holy*, because he was near being canonized.
With the same allusion, he says in the *Bard*:

“ And spare the meek usurper's holy head.”

In the *Ode on the Installation* he calls him—*The martyr'd Saint*.

Verse 5. ————The stately brow
Of Windsor's heights.

“ ————And now to where
“ Majestic *Windsor* lifts his princely brow.”

Thomson's Summer, 1411.

And ye——

That is, I suppose, *ye towers*, or *spires*: which is but an awkward and disjointed expression in that connection.

Verse

Verse 8. Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers.

That is, the *turf* of whose *latin*, the *shade* of whose *grooves*, the *flowers* of whose *mead*. This is a peculiar artifice of composition, which, in the hands of a skilful poet, is neither inelegant nor useless, as it frequently prevents a superfluity of expression. Hebrew poetry abounds with examples of this mode of writing. The reader may find various specimens exhibited by *Bp. Lowth*, in the *Preliminary Dissertation* to his *Isaiah*. And, if I may be allowed such a reference on this occasion, in my *Commentary* on *Matth. vi. 6*. I have pointed out other instances, and have cleared some difficulties of Scripture upon this ground. I shall now content myself with only two instances, which will serve to point out this peculiarity more plainly to the reader.

“ I am black, but comely, O! ye daughters of Jerusalem!
“ As the tents of Kedar, as the pavilions of Solomon.”

Cant. i. 5.

That is, by an alternate combination of the members of each sentence: “ I am black, as the tents of Kedar; but
“ comely, as the pavilions of Solomon.”

Sir John Chardin, in *Harmer's Observations*, informs us, that the *Tents of Kedar* were made of dark-coloured goat's-hair: and it may be remarked that the same materials were applied to the same purpose in after-times and by other nations.

“ ————— *Barbas incanaque menta*

“ *Cinyphii tondent hirci setasque comantes,*

“ *Usum in castrorum, et miseris velamina nautis.*”

Virg. Geor.

“ The

“ The courtier’s, soldier’s, scholar’s, eye, tongue, sword.”

Shakeſpear.

That is, “ The courtier’s eye, the ſoldier’s ſword, the
“ ſcholar’s tongue.”

This ſingularity often occurs in *Mr. Pope*.

But *the courtier’s eye*, in the line juſt quoted, ever ob-
ſervant of the motions and will of his ſovereign, gives
me an opportunity of explaining a paſſage of *Shakeſpear*,
which is moſt grievouſly perverted and miſunderſtood.

“ _____ And then the lover,

“ Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad

“ Made to his miſtreſs’ eye-brow.”

So the paſſage is pointed in all the editions and quotations,
that I ever ſaw: but ſurely nothing can be more errone-
ous. For who ever heard of a *ballad made to* another?
It is nonſenſical and abſolutely indefenſible. A *comma*
ſhould be put at *ballad*, in order to connect *made to his*
miſtreſs’ eye-brow—with *the lover*, who is the proper ſub-
ject of the paſſage. *The lover, made to his miſtreſs eye-*
brow—obedient to her *nod*—ſubſervient to her *wink*—
depending upon her *eye*: as ſubmiſſive as even the world
itſelf was to the *widow*:

“ The world depend upon your eye,

“ And, when you frown upon it, die.”

This ſpecies of *homage* and *ſervile attention* is expreſſed
in the *New Teſtament* by *οφθαλμοδουλια*—*eye-ſervice*: and in
the *Greek Epigram*, by

_____ οὐδὲ πῦρ ὀφθῦν.

Ἐπιγραμμα.

The

The same *accommodation* of manners is thus pointed out by *Horace*:

“ *Verna ministeriis ad nutus aptus heriles.*”

And *Lucretius*, in that glowing picture which he presents us with in the beginning of his poem, is much better understood in this acceptance.

“ *Atque ita suspiciens tereti cervice reposita,*

“ *Poscit amore avidos inhians in te, Dea, vultus;*

“ *Eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore.*”

Verse 10. His silver-winding way.

This compound epithet is an incongruous combination. A *silver-winding way*, is a way that winds with silver, or like silver, which is absurd. The passage would not be exceptionable if the words were separated—*his silver winding way*—and *silver* made an adjective; as in *Pope*.

“ And the pres’d watch return’d a silver sound.”

Verse 11. Ah! happy hills! ah! pleasing shade!

This whole stanza is inimitably delightful and pathetic. No ideas are more grateful and soothing to the mind, than those which are suggested by a retrospect on youthful scenes, and a recollection of those enjoyments, that are never to return. Such contemplations operate with peculiar sensibility on tender constitutions, and especially on those, who are

“ —Mark’d by *Melancholy* for her own.”

The elegant *Dr. Fortin*, ruminating on the pleasures, which he had enjoyed in his early years at *Cambridge*, pathetically says, “ A pleasing remembrance of former times presents itself:

“ —Nec

“ ————— Nec me meminisse pigebit Eliffæ,
 “ Dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regat artus.”

But the noblest specimen of pathos and beauty upon this topic, is furnished by the father and prince of pœsy.— That pensive address of *Eumæus* to his unknown master, always breathed upon my spirits an utterable complacency and delight.

Ναὶ δ' ἐν κλισίῃ παύσει τε δεινυμένο τί,
 Κηδεῖσιν ἀλλήλων τερπόμεθα λευγαλοῖσι
 Μιωμομεῖοι· μῖλα γὰρ τε κ' ἀλγεῖσι τερπίλαι ἀνθρ,
 Οὔτις δὴ μάλα πολλὰ πάθη κ' πούλ' ἐκαλήθη. *Od. O. 397.*

To us let solacing remembrance tell
 The sadly-pleasing tale of mutual woe.
 E'en sorrow's self the suffering pilgrim's soul
 Soothes with a sweet complacency of bliss.

Verse 13. Where once my careless childhood strayed.

Thompson is incomparably excellent on a similar topic, and breathes in a most pensive strain of melancholy tenderness.

“ ————— Welcome, kindred glooms!
 “ Congenial horrors, hail! With frequent foot,
 “ Pleas'd have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
 “ When nurs'd by careless solitude I liv'd,
 “ And fung of nature with unceasing joy;
 “ Pleas'd have I wander'd through your rough domain,
 “ Trod the pure virgin snows, myself as pure.”

Winter, 5.

Verse 15. From ye———

This use of *ye*, though common enough in our earlier writers, is a most gross and offensive *grammatical* error.

Out of mere charity to the reader, it should be corrected:

I feel the gales, that from *you* blow.

Verse 18. The learned reader will observe, that *they seem* is here employed to signify a *reality*, like the *δουσις* of the elegant *Greek* writers.

Verse 19. And redolent of joy and youth—

“ And bees their honey *redolent of spring.*”

Dryden's Fable on the Pythag. System. Gray,

Παῖς ὡσπερ δρεῖς μάλ' αἰθ' ἰσθ' ἰσθ'. *Theoc. vii. 143.*

Of summer all was redolent.

In a similar construction *Milton* has—*benient of grief*:—
Samsf. Agon.

Verse 21. Say, Father Thames—

This stanza is poetical, and has the excellence of expressing trivial things with dignity.

Verse 23. Disporting on thy margent green.

“ By slow Meander's *margent green*

“ And in the violet-embroider'd vale.” *Milt. Com. 232.*

Verse 29. To chace the rolling circle's speed.

The verse would have been more poetical in this form:

To chace the circle's rolling speed.

Verse 38. Still as they run they look behind.

Nothing can exceed the nature and beauty of this description. It is, however, equalled in every respect by a divine passage in the *Æneid*, which will probably rise to the reader's remembrance on this occasion: a passage which

which can only be apprehended by feelings of equal sympathy with those, which it describes.

“ ————— Ferimur per opaca locorum :

“ Et me, quem dudum non ulla injecta movebant

“ Tela, neque adverfo glomerati ex agmine Graii,

“ Nunc omnes *terrent auræ, sonus excitat omnis*

“ *Suspensum, et pariter comitique onerique timentem.*”

ii. 725.

————— Through dreary ways we go,

Darkling, precipitate : and I, who late

Brav'd all the weapons of th' embodied Greeks,

Now start at every breeze, at every sound,

Appall'd : all anxious for my fire and wife !

Horace has the same thought :

“ ————— Non sine vano

“ Aurarum et filuæ metu.”

Verse 40. And snatch a fearful joy.

A very happy expression : and equally happy is that stroke of the *Evangelist* : “ And they went speedily from the tomb with *fear and great joy* :” *Matth.* xxviii. 8.— and that of the *Psalmist* : “ *Rejoice with trembling.*” ii. 11. So the sublime *Lucretius* :

“ His tibi me rebus quædam divina voluptas

“ Percipit, atque horror.” iii. 28.

And his great imitator *Virgil* :

“ Obstupuit simul ipse, simul percussus Achates

“ *Latitia que metu que* :” *Æn.* i. 517.

They had before seen a similar beauty in their master :

————— ἡ δ' ἀρα μιν κηιδί διζαίλο κολπῆ

Δακρυοειν γιλασασα. *Il. Z.* 482,

G 2

—She

—She took him to her fragrant breast,
Smiling in tears.

And in another most natural and affecting passage :

Πασιν δ' ἰμμεροῖς ἵπτετο γοῶν. *Od. K. 398.*

All sympathis'd in *sadly-pleasing tears,*

And in *Pindar* :

Ἐξα δὲ δαμῶσι δυσφορῶν

Τετρῶν τε μυχθοῖς. *Nem. i. Stroph. 4.*

Nonnus too, in his metrical paraphrase of *John's Gospel*, has well expressed this mixture of sensations :

Πιθῆι λυβηται καὶ χαρμῶν. *c. xi. vers. 29.*

Diffolv'd in *grief* and *joy.*

But nothing of this kind can exceed a description in *King Lear* :

“—————But his flaw'd heart,

“Alack! too weak the conflict to support,

“’Twixt two extremes of passion, *joy and grief,*

“Burst smilingly.” *Act v. Sc. 8.*

Verse 41. Gay hope is their's, by fancy fed.

This is at once poetical and just : and yet there seems to be an impropriety in the next verse—

Less pleasing, when possess'd :

for though the *object* of *hope* may truly be said to be *less pleasing in possession* than in the *fancy*; yet *HOPE* in *person* cannot possibly be *possessed*: for, as the *Apostle* truly says, “Hope, that is seen, is no longer hope; for what
“a man seeth, how can he also expect to see?” *Rom. viii. 24.*

Verse

Verse 43. The tear forgot as soon as shed—

There is a pleasing image of this kind, finely conceived and well delineated, in *Mr. Cartwright's Poem of Armine and Elvira*, which I quote from memory.

“ If haply from his guarded breast
 “ Should steal the unsuspected sigh,
 “ And memory, an unbidden guest,
 “ With former passions fill'd his eye,
 “ Still pious hope and duty prais'd
 “ The wisdom of th' unnerring sway;
 “ And as his eye to Heaven he rais'd
 “ *Its silent waters sunk away.*”

To me the thought is quite new, and appears very beautiful.

Verse 47. And lively Chear of Vigour born.

It is not easy to discover the sense of *Chear* in this verse; for if it mean *sprightliness* and *gaiety*, the word is redundant and tautological.

“ And our fudden coming there
 “ Will double all their mirth and *chear.*” *Comus, 954.*

Verse 50. That fly th' approach of morn:

A pretty conclusion this of a most lively and natural description of that sprightly and enchanting age!

The reader will rejoice to see on this occasion a noble passage from the most sublime of all authors.

“ Now morn her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
 “ Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl;
 “ When Adam wak'd, so custom'd, for his sleep
 “ Was airy light, from pure digestion bred,

“ And

“ And temp'rate vapours bland ; which th' only sound
 “ Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
 “ Lightly dispers'd, and the shrill matin song
 “ Of birds on every bough.” *Par. Lost*, v. 1.

One thought of this highly finished description is originally found in an unknown poet quoted by *Aristotle* in his *Poetics*.

Ομοίως εχει. (ἢ φλοῦς) πρὸς τον ἡλιον, κὶ το σπαιρειν πρὸς τον
 καρπον' διο ειρηλαι.

Σπαιρων διοκισται φλογα :

Sowing the heaven-created beam.

From this *Lucretius* took his expression—

“ Lumine conferit arva—”

—*Sows the fields with light.*

And commentators have pointed out the resemblance between another thought, and a passage in *Virgil* :

“ Evandrum ex humili tecto lux fuscitat alma,
 “ Et matutini volucrum sub culmine cantus.”

Æn. viii. 456.

“ The chearful morn salutes Evander's eyes,
 “ And songs of chirping birds invite to rise.” *Dryden*.

Without being aware, at the same time, that *Virgil* was indebted to *Sophocles* for the thought.

Ως ἡμιν ἡδη λαμπρον ἡλιος σιλας
 Ξωα κινει φθογγαί' ορνιθων σαφη. *Elect.* 17.

Now the returning sun's effulgent beam
 Wakes the shrill matin music of the birds.

But who is he, that has exceeded *Mr. Gray*?

“ The

“ The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
 “ The swallow twitt’ring from the straw-built shed,
 “ The cock’s shrill clarion, and the echoing horn,
 “ No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.”

Descriptive poetry cannot go beyond this: for language itself has not in store more graces and greater magnificence of diction:

Verse 55. Yet see how all around them wait.

This representation of the *ministers of Fate*, and the two succeeding stanzas, which exhibit the variety of human passions, with their several attributes, blends moral instruction with all the animation and sublimity of poetry.

Verse 60. Ah! tell them they are men!

A grand concentration of ideas! “ Tell them, in one word, that they are MEN—the subject of every species of calamity! the epitome of wretchedness!” Which seems to convey the full sense of the *motto* prefixed to this *ode*.

Verse 61. Fury passions.

I do not know, that any poet, ancient or modern, has given us so complete a picture of the *passions* in so short a compass.

Verse 68. Envy wan.

“ With praise enough for *Envy* to look wan.”

Milton’s Sonnets.

Verse 71. Ambition this shall tempt to rise.

This stanza, vigorous and animated as it is, has some blemishes, which will not escape the notice of a man of taste.

tafte. In the first place, *try* is an insipid and feeble word:

The flings of falsehood those shall *try*.

This and the word *prove* are constantly used in this contemptible manner even by our correctest poets.

“ Not Cæsar’s empress would I deign to *prove*.”

Pope’s Eloisa.

and twenty other instances equally exceptionable might be easily produced.—And, in the next place, the rhimes have not sufficient variation—*high—infamy—try—eye*.

Verse 79. Moody Madness.

“ ————*Madness* laughing in his ireful mood.”

Dryden’s Fable of Palamon and Arcite. Gray.

Verse 81. Lo! in the vale of years beneath.

A most happy idea! and the whole stanza is exquisitely beautiful, and will not be disgraced by appearing in the same view with a passage in *Paradise Lost*, where description is carried to it’s highest pitch of excellence.

“ ————Immediately a place

“ Before his eyes appear’d, sad, noisome, dark,

“ A Lazar-House it seem’d: wherein were laid

“ Numbers of all diseas’d, all maladies

“ Of ghastly spasm or racking torture; qualms

“ Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,

“ Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,

“ Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,

“ Demoniac phrenzy, moaping melancholy,

“ And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,

“ Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,

“ Dropsies

“ Dropfies, and affhmas, and joint-racking rheums.
 “ Dire was the toffing, deep the groans: despair
 “ Tended the fick buiefst from couch to couch;
 “ And over them triumphant death his dart
 “ Shook.” *Book xi. verfe 477.*

Dr. Bentley, with an infipidity which can never be fufficiently admired, was for obliterating thofe three expreffive lines—*Demoniac phrenzy, &c.* which it feems were added by *Milton* in his fecond edition.

Verfe 86. That every labouring finew ftrains.

The difficult utterance of thefe words is happily analogous to the fenfe :

“ The verfe too labours, and the words move flow—”
 “ *Procedunt tardi vafte molimine verfus;*”

as I have feen that verfe well tranflated,

Verfe 88. Lo! Poverty—

This occasional fingling out of a particular figure from the groupe awakens the attention, and enlivens the defcription.

Verfe 93. The tender for another’s pain.

An amiable fentiment! ftrongly indicative of a benevolent and feeling heart.

Verfe 95. Yet ah! why fhould they know their fate!
 Since forrow never comes too late.

We meet with the fame thought in *Milton’s Comus*;

“ Peace, brother, be not over exquisite
 “ To caft the fashion of uncertain evils,

“ For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
 “ What need a man forestall his date of grief,
 “ And run to meet what he would most avoid ? ”

Terence was their author.

“ Nam nos omnes, quibus alicundè aliquis objectus est
 “ labos,
 “ Omne quod intereà est tempus, priusquàm id rescitum
 “ est, lucro est.” *Hec.* iii. 1, 6.

Verse 97. And happiness too swiftly flies.

A pathetic reflection in the *Georgics* was in his mind.

“ Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi
 “ Prima fugit: subeunt morbi, tristisque senectus,
 “ Et labor, et duræ rapit inclementia mortis.” iii. 66.

Man's prime of life passes on with double speed
 Precipitate: a ghastly train succeeds,
 Diseases, labour, heart-oppressing age;
 Then death with ruthless hand shuts up the scene.

Verse 98. Thought would destroy, &c.

Καιτοι σε η̄ νυν ταυτο γε ζηλων εχω,
 Οβ' ενεκ' υδεν τωνδ' επαϊσδαση κακων
 Εν τω φρονειν γαρ μηδεν, ιδις βι. Soph. Ajax, 555.

This comfort, child! attends thine infant years;
 Thy father's sorrows are to thee unknown.
 Absence of thought is prime felicity!

Where the scholiast quotes a similar passage from *Euripides*.

Ναι γαρ ζρονη; εκ αλγειν φηδαι.
 No sad reflections reach the infant mind.

There

There is the same blemish in the conclusion of this ode, as that noted above, a recurrence of rhimes too similar; which is extremely ungrateful to the ear:—*flies—paradise—bliss—wise*—are the terminations of the four last verses.

“*The Prospect of Eton College,*” says *Dr. Johnson*, “suggests nothing to *Gray*, which every beholder does not equally think and feel.”

By this confession then the *sentiments* are *natural*, and consonant to the feelings of humanity: and surely this property is no discredit to any composition, but, on the contrary, the greatest recommendation of it. What indeed is poetry, but an ornamental delineation of *natural objects* and of *human passions*? The only remaining question then is this: Whether *Mr. Gray* has given this exhibition with perspicuity of method, and in elegant, intelligible, and expressive language? And this, I think, no man will have the effrontery to dispute.

Our critic proceeds: “His supplication to father *Thames*; to tell him who drives the hoop or tosses the ball, is useless and puerile. Father *Thames* has no better means of knowing than himself.”

Just so, when *Virgil* invokes the river *Arethusa* to aid his last pastoral song—

“*Extremum hunc, Arethusa, mihi concede laborem*”—we might say: This invocation of *Arethusa* is *puerile* and *useless*: she could not hinder him from writing this pastoral if he chose; nor give him any assistance, if he did write it.

Or, when we read those elegant verses in the *Musa Anglicana*—

" At vos, qui *Ætonæ* colitis camposque virentes
 " Frondentesque simul silvas, felicia rura!
 " Dicite (vos et amant musæ, et vos carmina nostis)
 " Dicite (vicino nam vestros alluit agros
 " Flumine) quos crebrò gemitus dabat inclytus amnis;
 " Edidit infelix quæ tunc lamenta sub undis—”

But ye, who Eton's verdant plain frequent
 And Groves umbrageous, happy soil! tell ye,
 O! tell, ye highly-favour'd of the mine!
 What sighs, what groans sent forth the neighb'ring stream,
 What lamentations from his oozy bed.

If we were desirous of being ridiculous and absurd, we might remark, that this enquiry into the groans and lamentations of *Father Thames* was foolish, and of no use. Of no use, because they knew no more of the matter than the poet knew: and foolish, because *Father Thames* neither groaned nor lamented at all on this occasion.

Indeed the very attempt to refute such execrable criticism were an insult to the taste and understanding of the reader, if the character of its author might not possibly give it credit.

" His epithet *buxom health* is not elegant: he seems
 " not to understand the word."

The primitive meaning, to be sure, seems to have been *obsequious* or *yielding*: but the *Dr.* bears witness against himself, when he explains the term by *gay—lively—brisk*, from *Crashaw*; and by *wanton—jolly*—from *Dryden*.

" *Gray* thought his language more poetical as it was
 " more remote from common use."

Indeed! and I will venture to maintain, that this rule in general will be no bad criterion of poetic language, if
 it

it be not carried to the excesses of obscurity and tumour. *Horace* was of the same opinion, who excluded his *sermoni perpiora* from the claim of poetry for this very reason; and makes the *os magna sonaturum*—lofty expression, remote from the familiarity of common conversation and popular phraseology, to be of the essence of poetry, and indeed characteristic of it. The MORTAL *taste*, I presume, which occurs in the simple enarration of *Milton's* subject, is very remote from common use: but is it not poetical? And could it be otherwise flattened into prose, than by the substitution of some familiar and frigid epithet?

“ Finding in *Dryden*, *Honey redolent of Spring*, an expression that reaches the utmost limits of our language,
 “ *Gray* drove it a little more beyond common apprehension, by making *gales* to be *redolent of joy and youth*.”

That elegant, luminous, and magnificent diction, which gives *Mr. Gray* the superiority, in point of language, over all other poets; *Dr. Johnson* could neither relish in others, nor attain himself. His ideas were grand, but his taste was bad. No man has ever exceeded in sublimity his lines on *Shakespeare*:

“ Each change of many-colour'd life he drew;
 “ Exhausted worlds, and then imagin'd new.
 “ *Existence* saw him spurn her bounded reign,
 “ And panting *Time* toil'd after him in vain.”

But his poetical pieces, were they rigorously examined, would be found to consist of language seldom elevated, often harsh and mean, and commonly prosaic. He might be capable of producing—

“ Their

“ Their lot forbade : nor circumscrib'd alone
“ Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd ;
“ Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
“ And shut the gates of mercy on mankind :—

But this were far beyond his powers—

“ But not to one in this benighted age
“ Is that diviner inspiration given,
“ That burns in Shakespear's or in Milton's page ;
“ The pomp and prodigality of heaven ! ”

In short, he had *the thoughts that breathe*, but by no means
the words that burn.

O D E IV,

T O

A D V E R S I T Y.

——— Ζήνη

Την φρονειν Βροτουσ οδω-

σαντα, τω παθει μαδωσ

Θειτα κυριωσ ιχθιν.

ÆSCHYLUS, in Agamemnon.

DAUGHTER of Jove, relentless Power,
 Thou Tamer of the human breast,
 Whose iron scourge and tort'ring hour,
 The Bad affright, afflict the Best!
 Bound in thy adamantine chain
 The Proud are taught to taste of pain,
 And purple Tyrants vainly groan
 With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When

When first thy Sire to send on earth
 Virtue, his darling Child, design'd,
 To thee he gave the heav'nly Birth,
 And bade to form her infant mind.
 Stern rugged Nurse! thy rigid lore
 With patience many a year she bore:
 What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know,
 And from her own she learn'd to melt at others
 woe,

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly
 Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,
 Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,
 And leave us leisure to be good.
 Light they disperse, and with them go
 The summer Friend, the flatt'ring Foe;
 By vain Prosperity receiv'd,
 To her they vow their truth, and are again
 believ'd,

Wisdom in sable garb array'd
 Immers'd in rapt'rous thought profound,
 And Melancholy, silent maid
 With leaden eye, that loves the ground,
 Still on thy solemn steps attend:
 Warm Charity, the general Friend,

With

With Justice to herself severe,
And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing
tear.

Oh, gently on thy Suppliant's head,
Dread Goddess, lay thy chast'ning hand!
Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,
Nor circled with the vengeful Band
(As by the Impious thou art seen)
With thund'ring voice, and threat'ning mien,
With screaming Horror's funeral cry,
Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly Poverty:

Thy form benign, oh Goddess, wear,
Thy milder influence impart,
Thy philosophic Train be there
To soften, not to wound my heart.
The generous spark extinct revive,
Teach me to love and to forgive,
Exact my own defects to scan,
What others are to feel, and know myself a
Man.

N O T E S

O N

O D E IV.

T O A D V E R S I T Y.

THIS Ode is characterised by a sedate dignity of composition and a sublime morality. The mythological fiction, by which it is ennobled, is at least equal to any thing of the kind in ancient poetry, and is a decisive proof of the creative power of our author's genius. It is greatly to be lamented, that he should not have exerted himself in more examples of

“ Truth severe by fairy fiction dress.”

Poetry recommends herself most, when she appears as the *handmaid of VIRTUE*.

Verse 3. Torturing hour.

There seems to be some little impropriety and incongruity in this. *Consistency* of figure rather required some *material* image, like *iron scourge* and *adamantine chain*. This, however, is a very trifling blemish; if indeed it be a blemish, for I am diffident of my own judgement in this respect, and I recollect the remark to have been made by

a re-

a respectable friend of mine, whose critical taste is among the least of his excellencies:

Verse 5. Thy adamantine chain.

Αδαμαντίνων διασμων εν αεθραίοις κειμαις. *Æschyl. Prom. vinct.*
Indissoluble adamantine chains.

Verse 7. Purple tyrants.

“*Purpurei metuunt tyranni.*” *Hor.*

Verse 8. Unpitied, and alone:

A noble climax, and a fine thought, thus to make *solitude* the last aggravation of their misery! See Note on *verse 44. Ode on Spring.*—This idea is a great addition to the *pathos*, and confers the principal sublimity on some of the finest efforts of poetic genius.

Θοισα γαρ ὄπισθε ἀγρῶν ἴλαν,
Ἀνὰ τ' αἴθρα καὶ πύρας, ὡς ταυροῦ,
Μελαῖα μελεῖ ποδὶ χερυῶν. *Soph. Æd. Tyr. 485.*

Forlorn he wanders through the desert woods,
Through rocks and caverns, like an exil'd bull;
Hapless, alone, with solitary foot!

This *simile* of the bull will be best understood and illustrated by Virgil's *Georg. iii. 224.*

What a spirit of enthusiasm breathes in the following quotation!

“ _____ Agit ipse furem
“ In somnis ferus Æneas; semperque relinquit
“ Sola sibi, semper longam incomitata videtur
“ Ire viam, et Tyrios deserta quærere terra.”

Æn. iv. 465.

Mr. Pitt's version of this passage is well done, though the two first lines are but feeble.

“ Now stern *Æneas*, her eternal Theme,
 “ Haunts her distracted soul in every dream,
 “ In slumber now she seems to travel on,
 “ Through dreary wilds, abandon'd and *alone*;
 “ And treads a dark uncomfortable plain,
 “ And seeks her *Tyrians* o'er the waste in vain.”

But the grandeur of this vision will be more distinctly seen in a reflection from the mirror of *Eloisa*.

“ To dream once more I close my willing eyes :
 “ Ye soft illusions, dear deceits, arise !
 “ Alas ! no more ! methinks we wand'ring go
 “ Thro' dreary wastes, and weep each other's woe ;
 “ Where round some mould'ring tower pale ivy creeps,
 “ And low-brow'd rocks hang nodding o'er the deeps.
 “ Sudden you mount, you beckon from the skies :
 “ Clouds interpose, waves roar, and winds arise.”

Mr. Thompson has treated the same topic with more diffuseness, but with a rich fancy and with great sublimity.

“ Still interrupted by distracted dreams,
 “ _____
 “ Through forests huge, and long untravell'd heaths
 “ With desolation brown, he wanders waste,
 “ In night and tempest wrapt ; or shrinks aghast
 “ Back from the bending precipice ; or wades
 “ The turbid stream below, and strives to reach
 “ The farther shore ; where, succourless and sad,
 “ She with extended arms his aid implores :
 “ But strives in vain.” *Spring*, 1051.

In night and tempest wrapt, is

Ἡσυχία καὶ νιφάδα κεκαλυμμένη.

Mr. Dryden's imagination was equally luxuriant and happy.

“ In dreams they fearful precipices tread :

“ Or shipwreck'd, labour to some distant shore ;

“ Or in dark churches walk among the dead :

“ They wake with horror, and dare sleep no more.”

Annus Mirabilis, Stanza 71.

Verse 9.

This stanza is a convincing proof, that *Mr. Gray* could unite with strength and grandeur, ease, simplicity, and nature.

Verse 20. And leave us leisure to be good.

A fine thought incomparably expressed ! I cannot deny myself the pleasure of transcribing an eloquent passage from *Dr. Ogden's* sermons, which is calculated both to delight the understanding and to correct the heart,

“ Blessed be God for pain, sickness, disappointment,
 “ distress ; and every one of those various evils, with
 “ which the life of man is filled, and which are the sub-
 “ jects of our hasty complaints : evils, which are our
 “ greatest good ; which afflict, but purify ; tear and har-
 “ row up the soul, but prepare it for the seeds of virtue.”

A well-known but noble passage of *Shakespeare* may be introduced with great pertinency in this place.

“ ————— These are counsellors,

“ That feelingly persuade me what I am.

“ Sweet are the uses of Adversity!

“ Which,

“ Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
 “ Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.” 175

Verse 25. Wisdom, in fable garb array'd.

“ But hail thou goddess, sage and holy!
 “ Hail divinest Melancholy;
 “ Whose faintly visage is too bright
 “ To hit the sense of human sight,
 “ And therefore to our weaker view
 “ O'erlaid with black, staid *Wisdom's* hue.”

Il Penseroso, 11.

That curious and beautiful idea—

“ Whose faintly visage is too bright
 “ To hit the sense of human sight—

is transplanted from *Horace*:

“ Urit me *Glyceræ nitor*
 “ *Splendentis* pario marmore purius:
 “ Urit grata protervitas,
 “ *Et vultus nimium lubricus aspici.*” *Ode i. 19.*

Verse 26. Immers'd in rapt'rous thought profound,
 And Melancholy, silent maid
 With leaden eye, that loves the ground.

“ With even step and musing gait,
 “ And looks commercing with the skies,
 “ Thy *rapt* soul fitting in thine eyes:
 “ There held in holy passion still,
 “ Forget thyself to marble, till
 “ With a sad *leaden* downward cast
 “ *Thou fix them on the earth as fast.*” *Il Penseroso, 38.*

One

One of these thoughts *Mr. Pope* has transferred to his *Eloësar*

“Shrines! where their vigils pale-ey’d virgins keep,
 “And pitying saints, whose statues learn to weep!
 “Though cold like you, unmov’d and silent grown,
 “I have not yet *forgot myself to stone.*”

A passage, which I always thought to be most extravagant and unnatural, and the greatest derogation from *Mr. Pope’s* judgement, that, perhaps, can be found in all his writings: for he is remarkable on every occasion for propriety of thought and chastity of expression. The *hyperbole* in *Milton* does not offend us: because the application is not made to real and rational life, but to a personified quality of the mind.

And the *pale-ey’d virgins* is from *Milton’s*

“—*Pale-ey’d* priest from the prophetic cell.”

Hymn on Christ’s Nativity.

Verse 32. And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.

A most exquisite and tender verse! A similar *sadly-pleasing* sensation is excited by contrasting our own ease and safety with the misery and dangers of other men. On which topic, that passage of *Lucretius* is greatly and deservedly admired.

“Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,
 “E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem:
 “Non quia vexari quenquam est jucunda voluptas,
 “Sed, quibus ipse malis careas, quia cernere suave est.”

ii. 1.

’Tis sweet, when tempests rouse the main, to view
 From land the vessel struggling with the storm:

Not

Not that distress delights us, but the thought
Of others' danger, while ourselves are safe.

See Note on verse 40th, *On a distant Prospect of Eton College.*

Verse 41. Thy form benign.

This last stanza breathes a most amiable spirit of benevolence, and dictates a lesson of pure and sublime morality, delivered in the utmost propriety and simplicity of language. It leaves the mind completely satisfied, and finishes with inimitable strength and fullness:—

What others are to *feel*, and know myself a man.

Dr. Johnson thus briefly delivers his opinion of this *hymn*.

“Of this piece, at once poetical and rational, I will not by slight objections violate the dignity:” and (we will add for him) make too glaring an exposure of my own malice.

O D E V.

THE PROGRESS OF POESY.

PINDARIC*.

Φωνάρτα σφεταῶν' ἰς
 Δι τὸ πᾶν ἰμνῶν χαρίζω.

PINDAR, Olymp. 2.

I. 1.

AWAKE, Æolian lyre, awake,
 And give to rapture all thy trembling fringes,
 † From Helicon's harmonious springs
 A thousand rills their mazy progress take:
The

* When the Author first published this and the following Ode; he was advised, even by his Friends, to subjoin some few explanatory Notes; but had too much respect for the understanding of his Readers to take that liberty.

† The subject and simile, as usual with Pindar, are united. The various sources of poetry, which gives life and lustre to all its touches, are here described; its quiet

K

majestic

The laughing flowers, that round them blow,
 Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
 Now the rich stream of music winds along
 Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,
 Thro' verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign:
 Now rowling down the steep amain,
 Headlong, impetuous, see it pour:
 The rocks and nodding groves, rebellow to
 the roar.

I. 2.

* Oh! Sovereign of the willing soul,
 Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,
 Enchanting shell! the fullen Cares,
 And frantic Passions hear thy soft controul.
 On Thracia's Hills the Lord of War
 Has curb'd the fury of his car,

majestic progress enriching every subject (otherwise dry and barren) with a pomp of diction and luxuriant harmony of numbers; and its more rapid and irresistible course, when swoln and hurried away by the conflict of tumultuous passions.

* Power of harmony to calm the turbulent sallies of the soul. The thoughts are borrowed from the first Pythian of Pindar.

And

And drop'd his thirsty lance at thy command.

Perching on the scept'ed hand
 Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feather'd king
 With ruffled plumes, and flagging wing:
 Quench'd in dark clouds of slumber lie
 The terror of his beak, and light'nings of
 his eye.

I. 3.

* Thee the voice, the dance, obey,
 Temper'd to thy warbled lay.
 O'er Idalia's velvet-green
 The rosy-crowned Loves are seen
 On Cytherea's day
 With antic sport, and blue-eyed Pleasures,
 Frisking light in frolic measures;
 Now pursuing, now retreating,
 Now in circling troops they meet:
 To brisk notes in cadence beating
 Glance their many-twinkling feet.
 Slow melting strains their Queen's approach
 declare:

* Power of harmony to produce all the graces of motion in the body.

Where'er she turns the Graces homage pay,
 With arms sublime, that float upon the air,
 In gliding state she wins her easy way:
 O'er her warm cheek and rising bosom move,
 The bloom of young Desire and purple light
 of Love,

II. 1.

* Man's feeble race what Ills await,
 Labour, and Penury, the racks of Pain,
 Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,
 And Death, sad refuge from the storms of
 Fate!

The fond complaint, my Song, disprove,
 And justify the laws of Jove.
 Say, has he giv'n in vain the heav'nly Muse?
 Night, and all her sickly dews,
 Her Spectres wan, and Birds of boding cry,
 He gives to range the dreary sky:
 Till down the eastern cliffs afar
 Hyperion's march they spy, and glitt'ring
 shafts of war.

* To compensate the real and imaginary ills of life, the Muse was given to Mankind by the same Providence that sends the Day by its chearful presence to dispel the gloom and terrors of the Night.

II. 2.

* In climes beyond the solar road,
Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains
roam,

The Muse has broke the twilight gloom
To cheer the shivering Native's dull abode.

And oft, beneath the od'rous shade

Of Chili's boundless forests laid,

She deigns to hear the savage Youth repeat
In loose numbers wildly sweet

Their feather-cinctur'd Chiefs, and dusky
Loves.

Her track, where'er the Goddess roves,

Glory pursue, and generous Shame,

Th' unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's
holy flame.

* Extensive influence of poetic Genius over the remotest and most uncivilized nations: its connection with liberty, and the virtues that naturally attend on it.—[See the Erse, Norwegian, and Welch fragments, the Lapland and American songs.]

II. 3.

* Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,
 Isles, that crown th' Ægean deep,
 Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,
 Or where Mæander's amber waves
 In lingering Lab'rinth creep,
 How do your tuneful Echoes languish,
 Mute, but to the voice of Anguish?
 Where each old poetic Mountain
 Inspiration breath'd around;
 Ev'ry shade and hallow'd Fountain
 Murmur'd deep a solemn sound:
 Till the sad Nine in Greece's evil hour
 Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.
 Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,
 And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.

* Progress of Poetry from Greece to Italy, and from Italy to England. Chaucer was not unacquainted with the writings of Dante or of Petrarch. The Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt had travelled in Italy, and formed their taste there; Spenser imitated the Italian writers; Milton improved on them: but this School expired soon after the Restoration, and a new one arose on the French model, which has subsisted ever since.

When

When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
 They fought, oh Albion! next thy sea-en-
 circled coast.

III. 1.

Far from the sun and summer-gale,
 In thy green lap was Nature's * Darling laid,
 What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,
 To him the mighty Mother did unveil
 Her awful face: The dauntless Child
 Stretch'd forth his little arms, and smil'd.
 This pencil take (she said) whose colours
 clear
 Richly paint the vernal year:
 Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!
 This can unlock the gates of Joy;
 Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears,
 Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic
 Tears.

* Shakespear.

III. 2.

III. 2.

Nor second He*, that rode sublime
 Upon the seraph-wings of Extasy,
 The secrets of th' Abyfs to spy.
 He pass'd the flaming bounds of Place and
 Time :

The living Throne, the saphire blaze,
 Where Angels tremble, while they gaze,
 He saw; but blasted with excess of light,
 Clos'd his eyes in endless night.

Behold where Dryden's less presumptuous car,
 Wide o'er the fields of Glory bear
 Two Coursers of ethereal race,
 With necks in thunder cloath'd, and long-
 resounding pace.

III. 3.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
 Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er
 Scatters from her pictur'd urn
 Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.

* Milton.

But

* But ah! 'tis heard no more——
 Oh! Lyre divine, what daring Spirit
 Wakes thee now? tho' he inherit
 Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
 † That the Theban Eagle bear
 Sailing with supreme dominion
 Thro' the azure deep of air:
 Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
 Such forms, as glitter in the Muse's ray
 With orient hues, unborrow'd of the Sun:
 Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
 Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
 Beneath the Good how far—but far above
 the Great.

* We have had in our language no other odes of the sublime kind, than that of Dryden on St. Cecilia's day: for Cowley (who had his merit) yet wanted judgment, style, and harmony for such a task. That of Pope is not worthy of so great a man. Mr. Mason indeed of late days has touch'd the true chords, and with a masterly hand in some of his Choruses,—above all in the last of Caractacus,

Hark! heard ye not yon footstep dread! &c.

† Pindar.

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NOTES.

N O T E S.

O N

O D E V.

THE PROGRESS OF POESY.

THESE two *Pindaric Odes* of *Mr. Gray* have a much greater resemblance to the *Odes* of the *Theban* bard, than any thing of the kind in our own, and probably in any other language. Wildness of thought and irregularity of verse had usually been esteemed the only way to resemble *Pindar*. The characteristic excellences of *Pindar's* poetry are sublimity of conception, boldness of metaphor, dignity of style, rapidity of composition, and magnificence of phraseology. If a fair judgement can be formed upon those few specimens, which the desolations of time have spared, in grandeur of imagery and regularity of thought he is surpassed by *Mr. Gray*; as, on the other hand, he may justly claim a superiority from the moral dignity of his compositions.

These sublime and elaborate productions of genius chastised by learning, and of learning invigorated by genius, are from their nature by no means calculated to please the generality of readers, especially upon a slight acquaintance.

A fre-

A frequent and diligent contemplation of them is necessary to an adequate perception of their beauties; and, perhaps, no small tincture of that erudition, which enabled the author to produce them. Indeed, that spirit of lyrical inspiration, which they breathe—that divine glow of pathos, which at the same time melts and inflames the reader—cannot operate with their full effect, but on a congenial soul, attuned to the bold vibrations of enthusiastic poetry. The motto justly proclaims—

Φανερὰ συνίλουσι ες
Δι το παν ἔμπνευσαν χερσὶν.

To wisdom's ear 'tis sense and sweetness all:
Darkness and dissonance to vulgar minds.

He, who can continue amidst the blaze of splendour, that bursts around him—amidst the torrent of sublimity, that pours along—sedately speculating upon petty blemishes, is certainly a stranger to those sensations, which animated *Pindar* and *Mr. Gray*; and deserves for the punishment of his malice that poetical curse denounced by the pathetic *Collins* upon all those, which could reflect on the author of the *Seasons* without emotions of benevolence and concern:

“ With him, sweet bard! may fancy die,
“ And joy desert the blooming year.”

Verse 1. Awake—

“ Awake, my glory: awake, lute and harp.”

David's Psalms.

Pindar styles his own poetry, with its musical accompaniments, Αἰοληὶς μολπή, Αἰολίδις χορδαί, Αἰολίδων πνοαὶ αὐλῶν.—Æolian song, Æolian strings, the breath of the Æolian flute. *Gray*.

The subject and simile, as usual with Pindar, are united. The various sources of poetry, which gives life and lustre to all its touches, are here described; its quiet majestic progress enriching every subject (otherwise dry and barren) with a pomp of diction and luxuriant harmony of numbers; and its more rapid and irresistible course, when swoln and hurried away by the conflict of tumultuous passions. *Gray.*

Concerning this intermixture of the *simile* and *subject*, see the note on the fourth stanza of the *Ode on Spring*: and the reader may find some further illustrations of this peculiarity in Mr. *Huntingford's Apology* for his *Monos trophics*, p. 80.

The diction of this first stanza is nervous, rich, and poetical in the highest degree.

Verse 5. The laughing flowers, that round them blow,
Drink life and fragrance, as they flow—

These are most beautiful verses; and that happily poetical expression—*drink life and fragrance*—give them the superiority over a passage in the *Georgics*, which is exquisitely sweet and musical.

“Hæc circum casæ virides, et olentiæ latè

“Serpylla, et gravitè spirantis copia thymbræ

“Floreat, irriguumque bibant violaria fontem.” iv. 30.

“Herbs, that the ambient air with fragrance fill;

“While beds of violets drink the freshening rill.”

Wharton.

Milton is wonderfully grand upon this subject.

“How from that saphire fount the crisped brooks,

“Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,

“With

“ With mazy error under pendent shades
 “ Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
 “ Flow’rs, worthy of Paradise,” *P. Lost*. iv. 237.

Their original was Pindar :

————— ἰθά μαιαρον
 Νασον Ωκιανδης
 Λυραι περιπνευσιν’ αν-
 διμα δι χρυσοι φλογη,
 Τα μιν χερσοθεν, απ’ α-
 γλων δινδρων,
 Υδωρ δ’ αλλα θερσει. *Ol. ii. antist. 4.*

There incense-breathing Zephyrs, ocean-born,
 Fan the blest isle : there golden flowerets glow,
 Purple the ground, and sparkle on the trees,
 Or stud with lucid gems the folt’ring stream.

Verse 8. Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong.

“ While in more lengthen’d notes and slow,
 “ The *deep, majestic, solemn* organs blow.”

Pope’s Cecilia.

These three verses—

Now the rich stream of music winds along,
 Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,
 Through verdant vales and Ceres’ golden reign :—

are perfectly analogous in their application to the calmness and gaiety of those parts of the *Paradise Lost*, which describe the Garden of *Eden*, and the manners, employments, and conversations of our first parents. And the three next—

Now rolling down the steep amain,
 Headlong, impetuous, see it pour ;

The

The rocks, and nodding groves, rebellow to the roar,
 most happily correspond to the terrible graces—the sub-
 lime horror—with which the achievements of *Satan* and
 the battles of the angels are represented. And what other
 poet, *Shakespeare* excepted, can furnish such complete ana-
 logies to these contrasted circumstances of the *stream* of
 poetry?

Now pouring down the steep again.

Æschylus is sublime upon this topic :

————— καθιπλουλου

Ἐν χρομπίλαι βρα, πύλαι, βρομοι

Ἄμα χεῖτε δικαν ἰδάλῃ οροῖσπευ. *Sept. Theb.* 83.

The found of steeds tumultuous through the plain
 Flotes on the wind; like the resounding roar
 Of torrents stream'd impetuous from the hills.

Homer and *Virgil* have conducted the same comparison
 with great sublimity: but the reader will, perhaps, think
 the quotations already too numerous.

Verse 11. Oh! sovereign—

Power of harmony to calm the turbulent fallies of the
 soul. The thoughts are borrowed from the first Pythian
 of *Pindar*. *Gray*.

Verse 15. — The sullen cares,

And frantic passions—

“*Quorundam discutienda tristes cogitationes: ad quod
 symphoniae, et cymbala, strepitusque proficiunt.*” *Cels.
 de Med.* iii. 18.—And so, in the *Old Testament*, *Saul's*
evil spirit of melancholy was soothed by the *lyre* of *David*.

The

The ἵγρον τῆλον in the above quotation will be illustrated by the ἵχθη ἀκάνθη of *Theocritus*, and the *flexi acanthi* of *Virgil*: or, perhaps, still more by *seffos SOPOR IRRIGAT artus*: *Æn.* iii. 511.

Verse 25. The former part of this epode is all sprightfulness and gaiety, beautifully correspondent to the ideas: and forms a happy contrast with the dignity and solemnity of the conclusion.

Thee the voice—

Power of harmony to produce all the graces of motion in the body. *Gray.*

Verse 27. Velvet green:

“ His velvet head began to shoote out,
“ And his wreathed horns gan newly sprout.”

Spencer's May.

Verse 30. With antic sports—

“ I'll charm the air to give a sound,
“ While you perform your antic round.”

Macbeth, iv. 2.

Verse 32. Now pursuing, now retreating,
Now in circling troops they meet.

Which is exactly what *Callimachus* expresses by

Καὶ χορὸν ἀμφιλαφῆς, ἐν ἑνὶ ὄρει ἐψιασθῆαι. *Hym. Dion.* 3.
i. c. “ Et chorus confertis manibus in gyrum ducere, et
“ alios aliorum vestigiis insequi per montes.” *Vid. vers.*
241, 267. *del.* 301. *et alibi.*

So in the *Iliad*:

Ἔθρα μαν ἠΐθειοι καὶ παρθεῖοι ἀλφεισίβοιοι
Περχευσί, ἀλλήλων ἐπὶ καρπῶν χεῖρας ἐχοῦσις.

Οἱ δ' οἱ μὲν θρεξάσκον ἐπιγαμίνοισι ποδοσσι.—
Ἀλλοῖσι δ' αὖ θρεξάσκον ἐπὶ σιχαῖς ἀλλήλοισι. Σ. 593.

There, hand in hand; the jocund nymphs and swains
Lead on the dance: now round with circling feet,
And now pursuing in a lengthen'd train.

“Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
“In a light fantastic round.” *Comus*, 143.

Verse 35. Glance their many-twinkling feet.

Μαγμαεργαῖς θηῖτο ὠιδῶσι δαύμαζε δὲ θυμῶ. *Homet. Od. Θ.*
Grays

Milton says with still greater boldness—

“Nymphs and shepherds dance no more
“By fandy Ladon's lillied banks;
“On old Lyceus or Cythene hoar
“Trip no more in twilight ranks.” *Sonnets*.

That is, I apprehend, *glimmering ranks*; when the *part-
ing companies* admit the *light* between the *ranks*. But
Gray's epithet is in *Thomson*:

“———— Gradual sinks the breeze
“Into a perfect calm; that not a breath
“Is heard to quiver through the closing woods;
“Or rustling turn the *many-twinkling* leaves
“Of aspin tall.” *Spring*, 155.

which is extremely natural and pleasing.

Verse 37. Where'er she turns the graces homage pay.

M

There

There is an allusion in this verse to that well-known passage of *Tibullus*:

“ Illam, quicquid agit, quoquo vestigia vertit,
“ Componit furim, subsequiturque decor.”

where the expression is exquisitely delicate and curious: but the personification in *Gray* has more grandeur.

“ Grace was in all her steps.” *Milton*.

Verse 38. With arms sublime, that float upon the air,
In gliding state—

Mr. Thomson presents us with a similar image of great elegance:

“ ————— While the peacock spreads
“ His every-colour'd glory to the sun,
“ And swims in radiant majesty along.” *Spring, 780.*

Verse 39. She wins her easy way.

The word *wins* has been objected to in this application, but I think without reason; as the idea of *skill* and *dexterity* seems full as much contained in it, as that of *difficulty*. We cannot, however, have a more decisive proof of *Mr. Gray's* merit, than by observing with what petty cavils, despairing criticism is forced to content herself, in her endeavours to depreciate his poetry.

Verse 41. The bloom of young desire and purple light
of love.

Δάμνη δ' ἐπὶ πορφύρεσσιν

Παρίησι φῶς ἴσασθαι. *Phrynichus, apud Athenæum. Gray.*

And much in the same manner *Virgil*:

“ ————— *Lumenque juventæ*
“ *Purpureum, et lætos oculis afflavit honores.*”

Æn. i. 594.

Breath'd

Breath'd o'er his limbs the *purple light of youth,*
And shot fresh lustre from his sparkling eye.

Verse 42. Man's feeble race.

This second *Ternary* of stanzas is, in my judgement, superior to the rest of the ode, and abounds with the choicest beauties.

To compensate the real and imaginary ills of life, the Muse was given to mankind by the same Providence that sends the Day by its cheerful presence to dispel the gloom and terrors of the Night. *Gray.*

Verse 49. Night, and all her sickly dews—

The imagery and thoughts of this fine passage are adumbrated from a stanza of *Milton's* admirable *Hymn on the Nativity*; which single composition is impressed with such marks of genius, as would have entitled him to a rank in the highest class of poets.

“ So when the sun in bed,
“ Curtain'd with cloudy red,
“ Pillows his chin upon an orient wave;
“ The flocking shadows pale
“ Troop to th' infernal jail,
“ Each fetter'd ghost slips to his several grave;
“ And the yellow-skirted Fays
“ Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-lov'd
“ maze.”

He has further ennobled this sentiment with his epic powers in the *Paradise Regained*.

“ ————— Ill wast thou shrouded then,
“ O! patient Son of God! yet only flood'd'st

" Unshaken: nor yet stay'd the terror there ;
 " Infernal ghosts, and hellish furies, round
 " Environ'd thee ; some howl'd, some yell'd, some
 " shriek'd,
 " Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
 " Sat'st unappall'd in calm and sinless peace.
 " Thus pass'd the night so foul, till morning fair
 " Came forth with pilgrim steps in amice gray,
 " Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
 " Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,
 " And grisly spectres, which the fiend had rais'd
 " To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire." iv. 419:

Verse 52. Till down the eastern cliffs afar—

Or seen the Morning's well appointed Star
Come marching up the eastern hills afar. *Cowley. Gray.*

Verse 53. Glittering shafts—

This metaphor is taken from *Lucretius* :

" Non radii solis neque lucida tela diei."

The solar beams or the *bright shafts of day.*

Shakespeare in his *Hamlet* has a description of the *morn-*
ing, which is wonderfully elegant and poetical.

" But look, the morn, in ruffet mantle clad,
" Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill."

Verse 54. In climes beyond the solar road.

This stanza appears to me the most elegant in it's dic-
tion and numbers of any in the whole ode ; though it is
not easy to single out the chief beauty from such a collec-
tion of multifarious excellence.

Extensive

Extensive influence of poetic Genius over the remotest and most uncivilized nations; its connection with liberty, and the virtues that naturally attend on it.—[See the Erse, Norwegian, and Welch fragments, the Lapland and American songs.] *Gray*.

Extra anni solisque vias— *Virgil*.

Tutta lontana dal camin del sole. *Petrarch, Canzon e.*

Gray,

“ Beyond the year, and out of Heaven’s high way.”

Dryden.

which is extremely bold and poetical.

Verse 56. — the twilight gloom:

“ The nymphs in *twilight shade* of tangled thickets
“ mourn.” *Milton’s Sonnets.*

Verse 57. To cheer the shivering natives dull abode.

It almost chills one to read this verse. No language can be more expressive and picturesque.

Verse 61. In loose numbers wildly sweet—

The loose texture of this verse is most happily analogous to the meaning. It reminds one of *Milton’s* character of *Shakespear*.

“ Or *sweetest* Shakespear, Fancy’s child,

“ Warble his native wood-notes *wild*.”

A comprehensive encomium! worthy alike of its author and its subject.

Verse 64. Glory pursue.

This use of a *verb singular* after the first *substantive* is in *Pinder’s* manner.

Καταφθὸν δ' Ἀθήαιων
 Καὶ καταφθὸν Πολυδου-
 -κτι. *Nem. X.*

And in another place :

Τον μὲν ἔχοντα, κα-
 χλαδοσίας ἴθα, τον δ' ἔρσαν. *Pyth. iv.*

And *Homer* before him, as quoted by *Benedict* on this last passage :

Ἠχὸς βοῆς Ἑρμοῦς συμβαλλόν, ἠδὲ Σαμαθῆ.

Verse 66. Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep—

Progress of Poetry from Greece to Italy, and from Italy to England. Chaucer was not unacquainted with the writings of Dante or of Petrarch. The Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt had travelled in Italy, and formed their taste there; Spenser imitated the Italian writers; Milton improved on them: but this School expired soon after the Restoration, and a new one arose on the French model, which has subsisted ever since. *Gray.*

"With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving."

Milton's Sonnets.

Verse 69. Meander's amber waves.

"There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream."

Par. Reg. iii. 288.

"Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream."

P. Lost, iii. 359.

which is from *Callimachus* :

———— το δ' ὡς' ἀλεξιφρονὸν ὕδαρ
 Ἐξ ἀμαρων ἀνθου. *Hym. in Cer. 29.*

Verse 70. In lingering labyrinths creep.

A com-

A complete echo to the sense: superior to *Virgil's*

" ———— *tardis ubi flexibus errat*

" *Mincius:—*"

and to *Milton's*—

" *Running in mazy error's*"

the *mazy progreſſes* of our author at the beginning of this *Ode*.

Verse 71. How do your tuneful echoes languish.

These are noble images, and the true breath of inspiration: but the first praise is due to *Milton*, the source of every thing that is sublime and beautiful. The following stanza was *Mr. Gray's* original.

" The lovely *mountain o'er*,

" And the resounding shore,

" A *voice of weeping* heard and loud lament:

" From *haunted spring*, and dale

" Edg'd with poplar pale,

" The parting genius is with sighing sent:

" With flow'r-inwoven tresses torn

" The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets

" mourn."

Where *Thomson* seems to have derived the finest image in one of the most sublime passages of his *Seasons*.

" Along the woods, along the moorish fens,

" Sighs the sad *genius* of the coming storm;

" And up among the loose disjointed cliffs,

" And fractur'd mountains wild, the brawling brook

" And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,

" Resounding long in list'ning fancy's ear." *Winter, 66.*

Verse

Verse 80. And coward Vice, that revels in her chains—

“ Servitude, that hugs her chain.” *Ode on the Instab.*

Verse 83. Far from the sun and summer gale.

A great strength and elegance of imagination are displayed in this and the following stanza: and every ingenious mind and true lover of the muses must be highly gratified at this noble tribute of respect and gratitude to the two greatest geniuses that ever dignified human nature.

Far from the sun.

There is something of the same thought in these lines of *Virgil*:

“ Non obtusa adeò gestamus pectora pæni,

“ Nec tam *aversus* equos Tyria sol jungit ab urbe.”

Æn. i. 567.

Verse 84. In thy green lap—

“ The flowery May, who from her *green lap* throws

“ The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.” *Milt. Son.*

Shakespear. *Gray.*

Verse 86. To him the mighty mother did unveil

Her awful face.

Wicked memory brings into the mind the *Queen* of the *Dunces*, and destroys all the pleasure of the description by an unlucky contrast.

“ *The mighty mother*, and her son, who brings

“ The *Smithfield muses* to the ear of kings—

“ A cloud of fogs dilates her *awful face*—”

And I cannot help being of opinion, that an image of less solemn-

solemnity would have been much more suitable to the modesty and simplicity of nature.

Verse 88: — and smil'd.

An allusion, perhaps, to that verse of *Virgil*:

“ Incipè, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem.”

Verse 89. This pencil take—

This donation to *Shakespeare* of all the colouring of expression, and of the power over every passion of the heart, is very beautifully figured under the images of a pencil and a key, and is a noble poetical creation.

Verse 91. Golden keys.

“ Yet some there be, that by due steps aspire

“ To lay their just hands on that golden key,

“ That opes the palace of eternity.” *Comus*, v. 12.

Verse 94: — the sacred source of sympathetic tears.

I have somewhere read in *Æschylus*, but cannot recollect the place, of the *πηγὴ δακρυῶν*—the fountain of tears— which might supply *Mr. Gray* with this idea; which again occurs in the stanza—*O! lachrymarum fons*, preserved by *Mr. Mason* in the *Memoirs*.

Verse 94. Nor second he—

Milton. *Gray*.

This representation of *Milton's* genius is exhibited in all the sublimity of conception peculiar to that great poet; and in all the magnificence of his language.

Verse 98. He pass'd the flaming bounds of place and time.

— *Flammantia moenia mundi.* *Lucretius.* *Gray.*

Verse 99. The living throne, the sapphire-blaze:

For the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels, and above the firmament that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone—this was the appearance of the glory of the Lord. *Ezekiel, i. 20, 26, 28. Gray.*

Verse 101. He saw—

“ — oculos a fuis attollere contra.” *Lucret.*

Verse 102. Clos'd his eyes in endless night.

ὄφθαλμοῦ μὴ ἀμείροισ' ἰδεῖν δ' ἠδὲ τὰν ἀοιδῶν. *Homer's Od. Gray.*

It certainly is no such hyperbolical fiction for poetry, which has the immemorial privilege of *quidlibet audendi*, to attribute the loss of Milton's eyes to the dazzling splendor of those heavenly visions, which he contemplated during the composition of *Paradise Lost*: when he himself ascribes this misfortune to his studious exertions in the cause of liberty.

“ — What supports me, dost thou ask?

“ The conscience, friend, to 'ave lost them everly'd

“ In liberty's defence, my noble task,

“ Of which all Europe talks, from side to side.” *Scott.*

“ — in *aternam* clauduntur lumina noctem.” *Virg. Æn.*

“ — Her mother blind

“ Sate in *eternal night.*” *Faery Queen.*

Verse 108. With necks in thunder cloth'd—

Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? *Job.*

This verse, and the foregoing, are meant to express the stately march and founding energy of Dryden's rhymes.

Gray.

Verse

Verse 107: Hark! his hands the lyre explore!

This is highly animated, and the image of *Fancy* is incomparably beautiful and poetical.

Verse 110. Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.

Words that weep, and tears that speak. *Cowley. Gray.*

Verse 111. But ah! 'tis heard no more—

We have had in our language no other odes of the sublime kind, than that of Dryden on St. Cecilia's day: for Cowley (who had his merit) yet wanted judgment, style, and harmony for such a task. That of Pope is not worthy of so great a man. Mr. Mason indeed of late days has touched the true chords, and with a masterly hand in some of his Choruses,—above all in the last of *Caractacus*,

Hark! heard ye not yon footstep dread! *Gr. Gray.*

Verse 113. Wakes thee now.

He has employed the same term in his *Elegy*, accompanied with a rich profusion of words:

Or wake to extasy the living lyre.

Milton had given the example:

“————— With preamble sweet

“Of charming symphony, they introduce

“Their sacred song, and waken raptures high.”

Par. Lost, iii. 367.

But the first praise is due to *Lucretius*:

“— Musæa mele, per chordas Organici quæ

“Mobilibus digitis experspecta figurant.” *ii. 412.*

Curious expressions! of which it is not easy to transfuse the spirit into a translation.

Harmonious sounds! which the quick-shooting hand
Wakens in figur'd raptures through the strings.

In the *Elegies of Gallus* the same idea is conveyed in language of equal elegance.

“Docta loqui digitis, et carmina fingere docta;
 “Et responfuram follicitare lyram.”

Verse 114. — ample pinion.

This image of *Pindar* is principally derived from a passage in *Horace*, in which he contrasts himself with the *Theban* bard: a passage, which for elegance of thought, beauty of expression, and melody of verse, is not excelled by any part of his *lyric* compositions.

“Multa dircaëum levat aura cygnum
 “Tendit, Antoni, quoties in altos
 “Nubium fractus. Ego apis matinae
 “More modoque,
 “Grata carpentis thyma per laborem
 “Plurimum, circa nemus uvidique
 “Tiburis ripas, operosa parvus
 “Carmina fingo,”

That happy suspension of the verse—*tendit, Antoni*—gives additional dignity to the description, and almost exhibits to our eye the majestic ascension of the bird.

A swelling gale bears up the *Theban* swan,
 While through the clouds sublime he wings his way.

I, like a matin bee, that sips the flowers
 With toil assiduous o'er th' irriguous banks
 Of *Tybur*, painful frame my labour'd verse.

Verse

Verse 115. That the Theban Eagle bear.

Αἰὲς πρὸς ἄνεμα Σίον. *Olymp.* ii.

Pindar compares himself to that bird, and his enemies to ravens that croak and clamour in vain below, while it pursues its flight, regardless of their noise, *Gray*,

Verse 117. Azure deep of air.

“—*Cœli freta*,” the *deeps of heaven.* *Ennius.*

“—*Aeris mare magnum.*” *Lucret.*

—The spacious *sea of air.*

Verse 119. Such forms, as glitter in the Muse's ray
With orient hues, unborrow'd of the sun.

A new and very curious image! attired in as curious expression.

Verse 121. — his distant way.

“— non passibus equis.” *Virg.*

“*Proximus huic, longo sed proximus intervallo.*” *Id.*

Dr. Johnson's animadversions on this Ode betray such a gross want of taste, such a blindness to poetic beauty, and such an insolent illiberality of spirit, that it were a degradation of criticism, too great a token of respect to his petulance, and an insult to the judgement of the reader, to call them to a distinct examination. One or two curfory strictures will be sufficient.

“*Idalia's velvet green* has something of cant. An epithet or metaphor drawn from nature ennobles art; an epithet or metaphor drawn from art degrades nature.”

This

This is only true, when the application of such epithets or metaphors is inadequate or unjust. And the business of epithets and metaphors is *illustration* as well as *ornament*. I should entertain a very mean opinion of his taste and judgement, who could find fault with the following most admirable comparison :

“ Dryden’s page is a natural field, rising into irregularities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation : Pope’s is a VELVET LAWN, shaven by the scythe and levelled by the roller.” Dr. Johnson’s Comparison of Dryden and Pope :—which seems grounded upon that of Quintilian between Demosthenes and Cicero. What the great rhetorician has said upon those celebrated orators, and Dr. Johnson’s estimate of the several merits of our two noble poets, I look upon as the finest specimens of elegant composition, and critical acuteness, in the world.

“ Through the velvet leaves the wind,

“ All unseen ’gan passage find.”

Love’s Labour Lost, iv. 4.

“ Left and abandon’d of his velvet friends.”

As You like it.

That is, *the deer* : which is still a bolder metaphor in this application, but, I should think, not liable to censure.

I shall only remark further, that our critic’s judgement upon Mr. Gray’s allegory of *Shakespeare*, and his representation of *Dryden*, which is certainly characteristic, are to the last degree wretched and insipid.

ODE

O D E VI.

T H E B A R D.

P I N D A R I C*.

I. 1.

- **RUIN** seize thee, ruthless King!
 • Confusion on thy banners wait,
 • Tho' fann'd by Conquest's crimson wing
 • They mock the air with idle state.
 • Helm, nor † Hauberk's twisted mail,
 • Nor e'en thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail

* This Ode is founded on a Tradition current in Wales, that Edward the First, when he completed the conquest of that country, ordered all the Bards that fell into his hand to be put to death.

† The Hauberk was a texture of steel ringlets, or rings interwoven, forming a coat of mail, that sat close to the body, and adapted itself to every motion.

“ To

‘ To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
 ‘ From Cambria’s curse, from Cambria’s tears!
 Such were the sounds, that o’er the crested
 pride

Of the first Edward scatter’d wild dismay,
 As down the steep of * Snowdon’s shaggy side
 He wound with toilsome march his long array,
 Stout † Glo’ster stood aghast in speechless
 trance :

To arms! cried ‡ Mortimer, and couch’d his
 quiv’ring lance.

* *Snowdon* was a name given by the Saxons to that mountainous tract, which the Welch themselves call *Craigian-eryri*: it included all the highlands of Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire, as far east as the river Conway. R. Hygden, speaking of the castle of Conway built by King Edward the first, says, “ Ad ortum amnis Conway “ ad clivum montis Erery;” and Matthew of Westminster, (ad ann. 1283,) “ Apud Aberconway ad pedes montis “ Snowdoniæ fecit erigi castrum forte.”

† Gilbert de Clare, surnamed the Red, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, son-in-law to King Edward.

‡ Edmond de Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore.

They both were *Lords-Marchers*, whose lands lay on the borders of Wales, and probably accompanied the King in this expedition.

I. 2.

On a rock, whose haughty brow
 Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
 Robed in the sable garb of woe,
 With haggard eyes the Poet flood;
 (Loose his beard, and hoary hair
 Stream'd, like a meteor, to the troubled air)
 And with a Master's hand, and Prophet's fire,
 Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre:
 ' Hark, how each giant oak, and desert cave,
 ' Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!
 ' O'er thee, oh King! their hundred arms they
 ' wave,
 ' Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;
 ' Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
 ' To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's
 ' lay.

I. 3.

' Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
 ' That huff'd the stormy main:
 ' Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed:
 ' Mountains, ye mourn in vain
 ' Modred, whose magic song
 ' Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-top'd
 ' head.

* On dreary Arvon's shore they lie,
 Smear'd with gore, and ghastly pale;
 Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail;
 The famish'd eagle screams, and passes by.
 Dear lost companions of my tasteless art,
 Dear, as the light that visits these sad eyes,
 Dear, as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
 Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—
 No more I weep. They do not sleep.
 † On yonder cliffs, a griesly band,
 I see them sit, they linger yet,
 † Avengers of their native land:
 With me in dreadful harmony they join,
 And † weave with bloody hands the tissue of
 thy line.

* The shores of Caernarvonshire opposite to the Isle of Anglesey.

† Cambden and others observe, that eagles used annually to build their aerie among the rocks of Snowdon, which from thence (as some think) were named by the Welch *Craigian-eryris*, or the crags of the eagles. At this day (I am told) the highest point of Snowdon is called *the eagle's nest*. That bird is certainly no stranger to this island, as the Scots, and the people of Cumberland, Westmoreland, &c. can testify: it even has built its nest in the Peak of Derbyshire. [See Willoughby's *Ornithol.* published by Ray.]

‡ See the Norwegian Ode, that follows.

II. 1.

* Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
 " The winding-sheet of Edward's race.
 " Give ample room, and verge enough
 " The characters of hell to trace.
 " Mark the year, and mark the night,
 " * When Severn shall re-echo with affright
 " The shrieks of death, thro' Berkley's roofs
 " that ring,
 " Shrieks of an agonizing King!
 " † She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,
 " That tear't the bowels of thy mangled Mate,
 " ‡ From thee be born, who o'er thy country
 " hangs
 " The scourge of Heav'n. What Terrors round
 " him wait!
 " Amazement in his van, with Flight combin'd,
 " And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude be-
 " hind.

* Edward the Second, cruelly butchered in Berkley-Castle.

† Isabel of France, Edward the Second's adulterous Queen.

‡ Triumphs of Edward the Third in France.

II. 2.

" Mighty victor, mighty Lord,
 " * Low on his funeral couch he lies!
 " No pitying heart, no eye, afford
 " A tear to grace his obsequies.
 " Is the fable † Warrior fled?
 " Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead,
 " The Swarm, that in thy noon-tide beam
 " were born?
 " Gone to salute the rising Morn.
 " Fair ‡ laughs the Morn, and soft the Zephyr
 " blows,
 " While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
 " In gallant trim the gilded Vessel goes;
 " Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;
 " Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's
 " sway,
 " That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his
 " evening-prey.

* Death of that King, abandoned by his Children, and even robbed in his last moments by his Courtiers and his Mistress.

† Edward, the Black Prince, dead sometime before his Father.

‡ Magnificence of Richard the Second's reign. See Froissard, and other contemporary Writers.

II. 3.

“ * Fill high the sparkling bowl,
 “ The rich repast prepare,
 “ Rest of a crown, he yet may share the feast:
 “ Close by the regal chair
 “ Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
 “ A baleful smile upon their baffled Guest.
 “ Heard ye the din of † battle bray,
 “ Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
 “ Long years of havock urge their destin’d
 “ course,
 “ And thro’ the kindred squadrons mow their
 “ way.
 “ Ye Towers of Julius, ‡ London’s lasting
 “ shame,
 “ With many a foul and midnight murder fed,

* Richard the Second (as we are told by Archbishop Scroop and the confederate Lords in their manifesto, by Thomas of Walsingham, and all the older writers) was starved to death. The story of his assassination by Sir Piers of Exon, is of much latter date.

† Ruinous civil wars of York and Lancaster.

‡ Henry the Sixth, George Duke of Clarence, Edward the Fifth, Richard Duke of York, &c. believed to be murdered secretly in the Tower of London. The oldest part of that structure is vulgarly attributed to Julius Cæsar.

“ Revere

* Revere his * Consort's faith, his † Father's
 " fame,
 " And spare the meek † Usurper's holy head.
 " Above, below, the § rose of snow,
 " Twin'd with her blushing foe, we spread:
 " The bristled || Boar in infant-gore
 " Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
 " Now, Brothers, bending o'er th' accursed
 " loom,
 " Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify
 " his doom.

III. 1.

" Edward, lo! to sudden fate
 " (Weave the woof. The thread is spun.)

* Margaret of Anjou, a woman of heroic spirit, who struggled hard to save her Husband and her Crown.

† Henry the Fifth.

‡ Henry the Sixth, very near being canonized. The line of Lancaster had no right of inheritance to the Crown.

§ The white and red roses, devices of York and Lancaster.

|| The silver Boar was the badge of Richard the Third, whence he was usually known in his own time by the name of *the Boar*.

" Half

- “ * Half of thy heart we consecrate.
 “ (The web is wove. The work is done.)”
 • Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn
 • Leave me unblest’d, unpitied, here to mourn †
 • In yon bright track, that fires the western
 • skies,
 • They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
 • But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon’s
 • height
 • Descending slow their glittering skirts unroll?
 • Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,
 • Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul!
 • No more our long-lost † Arthur we bewail.
 • All-hail, ‡ ye genuine Kings, Britannia’s
 • issue, hail.

* Eleanor of Castile died a few years after the conquest of Wales. The heroic proof she gave of her affection for her Lord is well known. The monuments of his regret, and sorrow for the loss of her, are still to be seen at Northampton, Geddington, Waltham, and other places.

† It was the common belief of the Welch nation, that King Arthur was still alive in Fairy-Land, and should return again to reign over Britain.

‡ Both Merlin and Taliessin had prophesied, that the Welch should regain their sovereignty over this island; which seemed to be accomplished in the house of Tudor.

III. 2.

' Gift with many a Baron bold
 ' Sublime their starry fronts they rear ;
 ; And gorgeous Dames, and Statesmen old
 ' In bearded majesty, appear.
 ' In the midst a Form divine !
 ' Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-Line ;
 ' Her lyon-port *, her awe-commanding face,
 ' Attemper'd sweet to virgin-grace.
 ' What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
 ' What strains of vocal transport round her
 ' play !
 ' Hear from the grave, great Taliessin †, hear ;
 ' They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
 ' Bright Rapture calls, and soaring, as she sings,
 ' Wayes in the eye of Heav'n her many-
 ' colour'd wings.

* Speed relating an audience given by Queen Elizabeth to Paul Dzialinski, Ambassador of Poland, says, ' And thus she, lion-like rising, daunted the insupert Orator no less with her stately port and majesticall deporture, than with the tartness of her princelie checkes.'

† Taleffin, Chief of the Bards, flourished in the Vith Century. His works are still preserved, and his memory held in high veneration among his countrymen.

III. 3.

- ‘ The verse adorn again
 ‘ Fierce War, and faithful Love,
 ‘ And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction dress.
 ‘ In * buskin’d measures move
 ‘ Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
 ‘ With Horror, Tyrant of the throbbing breast.
 ‘ A † Voice as of the Cherub-Choir,
 ‘ Gales from blooming Eden bear;
 ‘ ‡ And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
 ‘ That lost in long futurity expire.
 ‘ Fond impious man, think’st thou yon fan-
 ‘ guine cloud
 ‘ Rais’d by thy breath, has quench’d the Orb
 ‘ of day?
 ‘ To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
 ‘ And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
 ‘ Enough for me: With joy I see
 ‘ The different doom our Fates assign.
 ‘ Be thine Despair, and scept’red Care,
 ‘ To triumph, and to die, are mine.’

* Shakespear.

† Milton.

‡ The succession of Poets after Milton’s time.

P

He

He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's
height
Deep in the roaring tide he plung'd to end
less night.

NOTES

N O T E S

O N

O D E VI.

. T H E B A R D .

It does not appear to me, that this Ode is by any means superior to the *Progress of Poetry*, either for nobler efforts of invention, a luxuriance of splendid diction, or a richer vein of poetry. In the grandeur and wildness of its scenery it may, perhaps, claim some superiority: and the historical circumstances, that are interwoven in it, may render it more interesting and agreeable to the *English* reader. It has too in this respect a greater resemblance to *Pindar's* mode of composition, who is perpetually diversifying his subject with historical episodes and digressions. But the former Ode is, in my opinion, more correct and more truly poetical.

Verse 1. Ruin seize thee, ruthless King.

The tumultuary haste of this exordium, and the unknown tendency of the enraged prophet's denunciation, rouse the attention, and lead it to expect great things; nor will the sequel disappoint it. Here is no transient

P a

flash

flash of poetical enthusiasm, that vanishes in smoke; but an unremitting blaze of splendour.

Verse 4. They mock the air with idle state.

Mocking the air with colours idly spread,

Shakesp. K. John. Gray.

Verse 5. [See Gray's Note, *Hauberk.*]

Verse 7. To save, &c.

This line certainly has not an equal vigour with the rest of the stanza, and the first epithet at least is trite and feeble.

Verse 9. ——— the crested pride.

The crested adder's pride. *Dryden's Ind. Queen. Gray.*

Verse 10. ——— scatter'd wild dismay.

A bold poetical expression! conveyed in a just and consistent *metaphor*, descriptive of the physical effects of sound, which disperses and propagates itself in every direction from the sounding body as it's centre.

Verse 11. [See Gray's Note, *Snowdon.*]

Verse 13. [Ibid. *Glo'ster.*]

Verse 14. [Ibid. *Mortimer.*]

Verse 15. On a rock.

The turbulent impetuosity of the preceding stanza, and the sedate majesty of this, form a most pleasing and animated contrast. The portraiture of the Bard is venerable indeed: every word presents us with a picture. In short, the whole composition is on fire, glowing with strength and sparkling with beauty.

—whose

—— whose haughty brow.

So *Homer* ἐπ' ὄφρουσι καλλιπάλωνος—ἐπ' ὄφρουσι, ἔξ ἐπ' ὄφρουσι—*αιγιαλοῖο*—*Mosctus*, & *Apollonius Rhodius*: and *St. Luke*—*της ὄφρου*—*του ὄφρου*—iv. 29. of his Gospel.—“*Ecce! super-cilio clivosi tramitis:*” *Virg.*—*Homer* says with greater boldness, ἰλιϑὸς ὄφρουισσα: but *Mr. Gray's* correspondent term—*frowns*—is a happy continuation of the figure.

Verse 17. Rob'd in the fable garb of woe.

“*Perpetuo mærore nigraque in veste senescant.*” *Juv.*

Verse 18. I wish *Mr. Gray* could have introduced a more poetical expression, than the inactive term *flood*, into this fine passage: as *Shakespeare* has for instance in his description of *Dover-Cliff*.

“————— Half-way down,

“*Hangs one, that gathers samphire; dreadful trade!*”

which is the same happy picture as that of *Virgil*.

“*Dumosa pendere procùl de rupe videbo.*” *Ecl. i. 76.*

Verse 19. Loose his beard and hoary hair.

The image was taken from a well-known picture of *Raphael* representing the Supreme Being in the vision of *Ezekiel*. There are two of these paintings, both believed original, one at *Florence*, the other at *Paris*. *Gray*.

Verse 20. Stream'd, &c.

“*Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurl'd*

“*Th' imperial ensign, which full high advanc'd*

“*Shone, like a meteor streaming to the wind.*”

Par. Lost, i. 535.

—troubled.

————— troubled air ———

A most happy epithet!—as if the very elements participated the rage and perturbation of the prophet!

Verse 21. And with a master's hand, and prophet's fire,
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.

This is poetical language in perfection; and breathes the sublime spirit of *Hebrew* poetry, which delights in this grand rhetorical substitution.

Verse 27. Vocal no more.

Horace says, with still greater elegance—

“ ——— auritas fidibus cantoris

“ Ducere quercus.”

Oaks, that had ears to his harmonious lyre.

Nor is *Milton* at all inferior:

“ ——— where woods and rocks had ears.

“ To rapture.” *Par. Lost*, vii. 35.

Verse 30. That hush'd the stormy main.

“ Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,

“ That the rude sea grew civil at her song.”

Mids. Night's Dream

Verse 34. — cloud-topt head.

“ The cloud-capt towers.” *Shakespear*.

Verse 35. [See *Gray's* Note, *Arvon*.]

Verse 37. Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail.

Lucan presents us with a similar circumstance:

“ ————— pererrat

“ Corpora

“ Corpora cæforum, tumulis projecta negatis.

“ Continuo fugere lupi, fugere revulsis

“ Unguibus imposte volucres.” *Pharf.* vi. 625.

————— o'er the unurn'd dead

She stalks: the famish'd wolves fly off in haste,

And birds unsated leave the dire repast,

And *Lucretius* :

“ Multaque humi cum inhumata jacerent corpora supra

“ Corporibus, tamèn alituum genus atque ferarum

“ Aut procul abflicbat.” vi. 1213.

which furnished *Virgil* with a hint, that he has finely wrought up into a great improvement upon his master.

It is finely descriptive of the horror of the *pestilence*.

“ Non lupus insidias explorat ovilia circum,

“ Nec gregibus nocturnus obambulat: acrior illum

“ Cura domat.” *Georg.* iii. 537.

The wolf no more explores the guarded fold,

Nor nightly plans his schemes: a nearer ill

Torments him.

Verse 38. [See *Gray's Note, Eagle.*]

Verse 40. Dear as the light, &c.

As dear to me as are the ruddy drops

That visit my sad heart— *Shakesp. Julius Cæsar. Gray.*

“ — O! luce magis dilecta sorori.” *Æn.* iv. 31.

Verse 42. Ye died amidst your dying country's cries,

“ And greatly falling with a falling state.” *Pope.*

“ And could'it not fall but with thy country's fate.”

Dryden.

Verse

Verse 48. And weave—

See the Norwegian Ode that follows. *Gray.*

And in my opinion he could not have ennobled his poetry with a grander thought and a more terrific scenery. But such wildness of imagination is not calculated to please inanimate phlegmatic souls. Such flights of poetry were not made for them.

Verse 54. [See Gray's Note.]

Verse 55. The shrieks of death, &c.

This verse is harsh and sluggish, from too thick a concurrence of consonants.

Verse 57. [See Gray's Note, *She-wolf.*]

Verse 59. [See Gray's Note.]

Verse 60. — What terrors round him wait
Amazement, &c.

This imagery is from *Virgil*:

“ ————— circumque atræ formidinis ora,
“ Iræque, insidiæque, Dei comitatus, aguntur.”

Æn. xii. 335,

Round him the God's retinue rages: *Fear*
Pale-viſag'd, Fraud, and Fury, grisly forms!

The original idea is in Homer, *Il. E.* 740.—But *Shakespeare* is still more picturesque and natural:

“ ————— at his heels

“ Leap't in, like hounds, should *Famine, Sword, and Fire,*
“ Crouch for employments.” *Henry Vth, Prologue.*

—And

—And Solitude behind.

“Necdum etiã geminos à tergo respicit angues.” *Virg.*
Nor sees the fatal asp's lurk close behind.

Verse 63. Mighty Victor, mighty Lord—

This is beyond all controversy the finest stanza of the Ode. Lyric poetry never gave a grander specimen of her powers.—Such bitterness of insult is highly characteristic of rage and indignation. *Mighty victor! mighty Lord!*—I know nothing comparable to it, except the Prophet's invective against the King of Babylon, *Isaiah*, xiv. 16.

Verse 64. [See Gray's Note.]

Verse 65. No pitying heart, no eye, afford.

This is *elliptical*: “Is there no pitying heart? Will no eye afford—” If this be not admitted, the poet is guilty of a great impropriety in applying a *tear*, literally to the eye, and *figuratively* to the heart, in the same sentence: which however, by the *comma* at eye, seems to have been his intention.

Verse 67. [See Gray's Note, *Sable Warrior.*]

Verse 69. The swarm, &c. that in thy noon-tide, &c.

The *summer friends* in the *Hymn to Adversity*.

This image is inexpressibly beautiful, but not superior to that, which it so happily and unaffectedly introduces—*Gone to salute the rising MORN.*

Verse 71. Fair laughs the Morn—

It is altogether the finest display of continued and connect-

ted imagery of the most pleasing kind, that I am acquainted with. [See Gray's Note.]

Verse 73. In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes.

Milton presents us with a similar comparison, but wrought up with less grandeur than this before us:

- " But who is this, what thing of sea or land ?
- " Female of sex it seems,
- " That so bedeck'd, ornate, and gay,
- " Comes this way sailing,
- " Like a stately ship
- " Of Tarsus, bound for th' Isles
- " Of Javan or Gadire
- " With all her bravery on, and tackle trim ;
- " Sails fill'd, and streamers waving,
- " Courted by all the winds that hold them play."

Samson Agon. 710.

Verse 76. That hush'd, &c.

This representation of the *whirlwind*, under the image of a *beast of prey* lying in *ambush* in the *day-time*, expectant of the *night*; is not only perfectly just and natural, but incomparably sublime. There is a noble description of this circumstance in the *Psalms*.

- " Thou wilt bring on darkness, and it is night :
- " Then will every beast of the wood come forth :
- " The roaring lions to tear their prey,
- " And to seek their sustenance from God.
- " The sun ariseth, they will retreat,
- " And lay them down in their dens." c. iv. 20.

I do not recollect exactly the same image in any classic author. *Virgil* has :

" Hinc

“ Hinc exaudiri gemitus iræque leonum

“ Vinita recusantum et sera *sub nocte rudentum.*”

Æn. vii. 18.

“ Here wolves with howlings scare the naval train,

“ And lions roar reluctant to the chain.

“ Here growling bears and swine their ears affright,

“ And break the solemn silence of the *night.*” *Pitt.*

Which, as Mr. *Wharton* observes, *Milton* has imitated in his *Comus*:

▲ ————— Whence *night by night*

“ He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl,

“ Like stabled wolves, or tygers at their prey.”

Verse 77. [See *Gray's Note.*]

Verse 79. Rest of a crown.

This recalls to mind a stanza in the ballad of *William and Margaret*, which Mr. *Bourne* has translated with uncommon felicity,

“ So shall the fairest face appear,

“ When youth and years are flown:

“ Such is the robe that kings must wear,

“ When death has *rest their crown.*”

“ Cumque dies aberunt molles et leta juvenus,

“ Gloria pallebit sic, Cypariffi, tua:

“ Cum mors decutiet capiti diademata, regum

“ Hac erit in trabea conspiciendus honos.”

The last distich in particular has a dignity, which the *Roman Elegy* never knew before.

Verse 81. Fell thirst, &c.

What can exceed the terrible sublimity of this picture? and what is at all worthy to be put in competition with it, except that of *Milton*, which our author seems to have had in view?

“He ceas'd, for both seem'd highly pleas'd; and Death
“Grinn'd horribly a ghastly smile.” *Par. Lost*, ii. 845.

In *Newton's* edition the reader may see, that *Homer*, *Statius*, *Cowley*, *Ariosto* and *Tasso* have a similar beauty, not equal to this of *Milton*: who yet, in my opinion, is less animated than *Mr. Gray*.

Verse 83. [See *Gray's Note*.]

This part of the Ode is crowded with events, and hurries the reader along with a rapidity too violent to be resisted.

Verse 85. Long years.

This personification is very sublime, and is seasonably introduced in that narrative part of the composition, which stood in most need of elevation and variety. And the length of the verses gives an additional dignity to the idea; which propriety is indeed preserved with surprising dexterity in every instance through the whole of these two Odes.

Verse 86. Kindred squadrons—

“Cognatasque acies.” *Lucan.*

An epithet which presents at once a train of melancholy ideas to the mind.

Verse 87. [See *Gray's Note*.]

Verse

Verse 89, 90, 91, 93, 99. [See Gray's Notes.]

Verse 105. But oh, &c.

A stateliness of verse well suited to the majesty of the image.

Verse 107. Visions of glory, &c.

This animated apostrophe will call to the remembrance of the classical reader an exclamation of similar enthusiasm in *Horace*.

“ Evæ! recenti mens trepidat metu,
 “ Plenoque Bacchi pectore, turbidum
 “ Lætatur. Evæ! parce, liber!
 “ Parce, gravi metuende thyrso!

Verse 109, 110. [See Gray's Notes.]

Verse 113. And gorgeous dames.

With equal or even greater dignity in his *Ode on the Installation*:

“ High potentates, and dames of royal birth,
 “ Ahd mitred fathers in long order go.”
 “ ——— undè omnes *longo ordine* possit
 “ Adversos legere, et venientum discere vultus.”

Æn. vi. 754.

The scenery of which passage seems to have been present to Mr. Gray's mind on both these occasions.

Verse 117. Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,
 Attemper'd sweet to virgin-grace.

[See Gray's Note.]

“ Tell

“ Tell me, have ye seene her *angel-like face*,

“ Like Phæbe faire ?

“ Her heavenly haviour, her *princely grace*,

“ Can you well compare ?

“ The red-rose medled with the whyte yfere,

“ In either cheeke ~~depeinden~~ *lively cheere* :

“ Her modest eye,

“ Her majesty,

“ Where have you seene the like but there ? ”

Spencer's April.

So our author in a former Ode :

“ And *lively Chear of Vigour born.*”

Verse 121. [See Gray's Note.]

Verse 123. ——— soaring, as the fings,
Waves, &c.

A beautiful allusion, arrayed in language highly poetical.

The eye of Heaven—αιδης ομμα—the EYE of ÆTHER;
Nonnus: that is *the sun*.

“ Hide me from *Day's garish eye.*” *Il Penseroso.*

“ ————— Her angel's face,

“ As the great eye of *Heaven*, shined bright.”

Faery Queen, canto iii.

Hence *Milton* finely calls the *Sun* in his *Paradise Lost*,
“ the eye and soul of this world.”

————— many-colour'd wings,

“ Hail! *many-colour'd messenger.*” *Tempest.*

Verse 126. Fierce war and faithful love.

“ Fierce

“ Fierce wars and faithful loves shall moralize my song.”

Spenser's Proem to the Faery Queen. Gray:

Verse 128. In buskin'd, &c. [Shakespeare. Gray.]

Verse 131. A voice, as of the Cherub-Choir,
Gales from blooming Eden bear.

Milton. Gray.

This representation of Milton's poetry under images taken from his subject is extremely judicious and pleasing.

Verse 133. [See Gray's Note.]

And distant warblings, &c.

“ Till, by degrees, remote and small,

“ The strains decay

“ And melt away,

“ In a dying dying fall.” *Pope's Cecilia.*

Verse 135. —Yon sanguine cloud—

He has a still bolder figure in the *Fatal Sisters*:

Horror covers all the heath:

Clouds of Carnage blot the Sun.

So *Pindar*—*φονε νεφέλαι*—a cloud of slaughter: Nem. ix. and *πυλμοιο νεφέ*—a cloud of war: Nem. ix.—And yet there seems to want consistency in the metaphors—*sanguine cloud*, and *cloud of slaughter*: and it, perhaps, must be ranked among the *glorious offences* of great wits.

This conduct of the allegorical comparison of the *Sun* is exactly after *Pindar's* manner, and is much more animated and in the spirit of lyric poetry, than a formal introduction of the *simile*.

I shall

I shall only animadvert upon one or two of *Dr. Johnson's* strictures on the *Bard*.

Though he does not condemn the abruptness of the exordium, he endeavours to undervalue it, as a mere *technical beauty*, and creditable only to the inventor. But whatever *Dr. Johnson* may insinuate, the correspondence of the *words* and tenour of the *composition* to the complexion of the subject, always was, and ever will be, a beauty. "When *indignation* is to be excited," says *Macrobius*, "the oration ought by all means to have an *abrupt beginning*; because *deliberation* and *tranquillity* were then unsuitable. And on this account *Juno* thus begins in *Virgil*:

"——— Quid me alta silentia cogis
" Rumpere?" *Saturn. iv. 2.*

How *Milton* has observed this propriety!

" Whence and what art thou, execrable shape,
" That dar'st, though grim and terrible, advance
" Thy miscreated front athwart my way
" To yonder gates?" *Par. Lost, ii. 681.*

And so every good poet in the world: nor will the mimicry of bad authors discredit *truth* and *nature*.

" The initial resemblances, or alliterations, (our critic proceeds) *ruin, ruthless; helm nor hauberk*, are below the grandeur of a poem, that endeavours at sublimity."

This is true, when these *alliterations* are employed for *their own sake* only: but, if the terms, that *happen to have* this *initial resemblance*, are the best that can be chosen, the objection is inapplicable and absurd.

" The

“ The bards are called upon to *Weave the warp, and weave the woof*, perhaps with no great propriety: for it is by crossing the *woof* with the *warp*, that men *weave the web* or piece.”

This observation may, or may not, be just; I cannot presume to make any determination upon so nice a point of manual science. An admirer of *Mr. Gray's* poetry is not often either a *weaver* or the son of a *weaver*; and therefore this mechanical inaccuracy will not be in the way of exciting much disgust. However, we shall not thank the *Lexicographer* for his sagacity: neither will the lover of *sculpture* think himself under much obligation to the discerning *Cobler*, who has convicted *Roubilliac* of ignorance in the noble art of *shoe-making*, by the detection of an unworkmanlike blunder in one of the *shoes* of *Sir Isaac Newton's* celebrated statue at *Cambridge*.

But *Dr. Johnson's* prejudices are most notorious and universally allowed; and his absolute poverty of taste is in nothing more conspicuous than his extravagant encomiums on *Dryden's* Ode to the Memory of *Killegrew*; a performance infinitely inferior to any production of *Mr. Gray*; a model indeed of almost every vice of composition; full fraught with sentiments at once puerile, low, and turgid; and debased by meanness of expression.—If at any time we feel our eyes dazzled by *Dr. Johnson's* bright and diffusive powers of understanding, we may turn for relief on his criticisms upon *Gray*, and on his PRAYERS and MEDITATIONS!

O D E VII.

THE FATAL SISTERS.

FROM THE NOURSE-TONGUE*.

NOW the storm begins to lower;
 (Haste, the loom of Hell prepare,)

Iron

* To be found in the *Orcades of Thormodus Torfaeus*; *Hafnia*, 1697, folio; and also in *Bartholinus*.

Vitt er orpit fyrir varfalli, &c.

The design of Mr. Gray in writing this and the three following imitative Odes is given in the *Memoirs of his Life*. For the better understanding the first of these, the reader is to be informed, that in the Eleventh Century *Sigurd*, Earl of the Orkney-Islands, went with a fleet of ships and a considerable body of troops into Ireland, to the assistance of *Sictryg with the filken beard*, who was then making war on his father-in-law *Brian*, King of Dublin:

Iron fleet of arrowy shower †
Hurtles ‡ in the darken'd air.

Dublin: the Earl and all his forces were cut to pieces, and *Siftryg* was in danger of a total defeat; but the enemy had a greater loss by the death of *Brian*, their King, who fell in the action. On Christmas-day, (the day of the battle), a Native of *Caithness* in Scotland saw at a distance a number of persons on horseback riding full speed towards a hill, and seeming to enter into it. Curiosity led him to follow them, till looking through an opening in the rocks he saw twelve gigantic figures resembling women: they were all employed about a loom; and as they wove, they sung the following dreadful song; which, when they had finished, they tore the web into twelve pieces, and (each taking her portion) galloped Six to the North and as many to the South. These were the *Valkyriur*, female divinities, Servants of *Odin* (or *Woden*) in the Gothic mythology. Their name signifies *Chusers of the slain*. They were mounted on swift horses, with drawn swords in their hands; and in the throng of battle selected such as were destined to slaughter, and conducted them to *Valkalla*, the hall of *Odin*, or paradise of the Brave; where they attended the banquet, and served the departed Heroes with horns of mead and ale.

† How quick they wheel'd, and flying, behind them shot
Sharp fleet of arrowy show'r— *Milt. Par. Reg.*

‡ The noise of battle hurtled in the air.

Shakeſp. Julius Cæſar.

Glitt'ring lances are the loom,
Where the dusky warp we strain,
Weaving many a soldier's doom,
Orkney's woe, and Randver's bane.

See the griesly texture grow,
('Tis of human entrails made,)
And the weights, that play below,
Each a gasping Warrior's head.

Shafts for shuttles, dipt in gore,
Shoot the trembling cords along.
Sword, that once a Monarch bore,
Keep the tiffue close and strong.

Mista black, terrific Maid,
Sangrida, and Hilda see,
Join the wayward work to aid:
'Tis the woof of victory.

Ere the ruddy sun be set,
Pikes must shiver, javelins sing,
Blade with clattering buckler meet,
Hauberk crash, and helmet ring.

(Weave

(Weave the crimson web of war)
Let us go, and let us fly,
Where our Friends the conflict share,
Where they triumph, where they die.

As the paths of Fate we tread,
Wading thro' th' ensanguin'd field:
Gondula, and Geira, spread
O'er the youthful King your shield.

We the reins to slaughter give,
Ours to kill, and ours to spare;
Spite of danger he shall live.
(Weave the crimson web of war.)

They, whom once the desert-beach
Pent within its bleak domain,
Soon their ample sway shall stretch
O'er the plenty of the plain.

Low the dauntless Earl is laid,
Gor'd with many a gaping wound:
Fate demands a nobler head;
Soon a King shall bite the ground.

Long

Long his loss shall Eirin * weep,
Ne'er again his likeness see;
Long her strains in sorrow sleep,
Strains of Immortality!

Horror covers all the heath,
Clouds of carnage blot the sun.
Sisters, weave the web of death;
Sisters, cease; the work is done.

Hail the task, and hail the hands!
Songs of joy and triumph sing!
Joy to the victorious bands;
Triumph to the younger King.

Mortal, thou that hear'st the tale,
Learn the tenour of our song.
Scotland, thro' each winding vale
Far and wide the notes prolong.

Sisters, hence with spurs of speed:
Each her thundering falchion wield;
Each bestride her sable steed.
Hurry, hurry to the field.

* Ireland.

N O T E S

O N

O D E VII.

THE FATAL SISTERS.

THESE Translations or Imitations of *Norse* and *Welsh* Poetry are *instinct with fire* and poetical enthusiasm; and are in all probability such as *Mr. Gray* alone was capable of making them. But the Poems themselves are not his own, and are therefore no proper subjects of critical observation. Whoever will be at the trouble of comparing them with the originals, will find, that *Mr. Gray* has not only transfused their energy into his imitations, but tinctured them with the spirit of his own genius. They are in perfection what the *Greeks* call *Μῦθῳ κενύοντι ῥῆμα*—the *enthusiastic words*—the words that burn—of the *Muses*.

O D E

O D E VIIL

THE DESCENT OF ODIN*.

FROM THE NORSE-TONGUE.

UPROSE the King of Men with speed,
 And saddled strait his coal-black steed;
 Down the yawning steep he rode,
 That leads to †HELA's drear abode:
 Him the Dog of Darknes spied,
 His shaggy throat he open'd wide,
 While from his jaws, with carnage fill'd,
 Foam and human gore distill'd:

* The original is to be found in *Bartholinus, de causis contemnendæ mortis; Hafniæ, 1689, quarto.*

Upreis Odinn allda gautr, &c.

† *Niflheimr*, the hell of the Gothic nations, consisted of nine worlds, to which were devoted all such as died of sickness, old-age, or by any other means than in battle: Over it presided *Hela*, the Goddess of Death.

Hoarse

Hoarse he bays with hideous din,
 Eyes that glow, and fangs that grin;
 And long pursues, with fruitless yell,
 The Father of the powerful spell:
 Onward still his way he takes,
 (The groaning earth beneath him shakes,)
 Till full before his fearless eyes
 The portals nine of hell arise:

Right against the eastern gate,
 By the moss-grown pile he fate;
 Where long of yore to sleep was laid
 The dust of the prophetic Maid.
 Facing to the northern clime,
 Thrice he trac'd the Runic rhyme;
 Thrice pronounc'd, in accents dread,
 The thrilling verse that wakes the Dead;
 Till from out the hollow ground
 Slowly breath'd a fullen sound:

Pr. What call unknown, what charms pre-
 fume
 To break the quiet of the tomb?
 Who thus afflicts my troubled sprite,
 And drags me from the realms of night?

S

Long

Long on these mould'ring bones have beat
 The winter's snow, the summer's heat,
 The drenching dews, and driving rain!
 Let me, let me sleep again.
 Who is he, with voice unblest,
 That calls me from the bed of rest?

Od. A Traveller, to thee unknown,
 Is he that calls, a Warrior's Son.
 Thou the deeds of light shalt know;
 Tell me what is done below,
 For whom yon glitt'ring board is spread,
 Drest for whom yon golden bed.

Pr. Mantling in the goblet see
 The pure bev'rage of the bee;
 O'er it hangs the shield of gold;
 'Tis the drink of Balder bold:
 Balder's head to death is giv'n.
 Pain can reach the Sons of Heav'n!
 Unwilling I my lips uncloze:
 Leave me, leave me to repose.

Od. Once again my call obey.
 Prophets, arise, and say,

What

What danger Odin's Child await,
Who the Author of his fate.

Pr. In Hodor's hand the Hero's doom;
His brother sends him to the tomb.
Now my weary lips I close:
Leave me, leave me to repose.

Od. Prophets, my spell obey,
Once again arise, and say,
Who th' Avenger of his guilt,
By whom shall Hoder's blood be spilt.

Pr. In the caverns of the west,
By Odin's fierce embrace compress'd,
A wond'rous Boy shall Rinda bear,
Who ne'er shall comb his raven-hair,
Nor wash his visage in the stream,
Nor see the sun's departing beam;
Till he on Hoder's corse shall smile
Flaming on the fun'ral pile.
Now my weary lips I close:
Leave me, leave me to repose.

Od. Yet a while my call obey,
Prophets, awake, and say,

What Virgins these, in speechless woe,
 That bend to earth their solemn brow,
 That their flaxen tresses tear,
 And snowy veils, that float in air.
 Tell me whence their sorrows rose:
 Then I leave thee to repose.

Pr. Ha! no Traveller art thou,
 King of Men, I know thee now,
 Mightiest of a mighty line——

Od. No boding Maid of skill divine
 Art thou, nor Prophetess of good;
 But mother of the giant-brood!

Pr. Hie thee hence, and boast at home,
 That never shall Enquirer come
 To break my iron-sleep again;
 Till * Lok has burst his tenfold chain.

Never

* *Lok* is the evil Being, who continues in chains till the *Twilight of the Gods* approaches, when he shall break his bonds; the human race, the stars, and sun, shall disappear; the earth sink in the seas, and fire consume the skies: even Odin himself and his kindred-deities shall perish. For a farther explanation of this mythology, see

“Intro-

Never, till substantial Night
Has reassum'd her ancient right;
Till warp'd in flames, in ruin hurl'd,
Sinks the fabric of the world.

“ Introduction à l'Histoire de Dannemarc, par Mons. Mallet,” 1755, quarto; or rather a translation of it published in 1770, and entitled “ Northern Antiquities,” in which some mistakes in the Original are judiciously corrected.

ODE

O D E IX.

THE TRIUMPHS OF OWEN*.

FROM THE WELCH,

OWEN's praise demands my song,
Owen swift, and Owen strong;
Fairest flower of Roderic's stem,
† Gwyneth's shield, and Britain's gem,
He nor heaps his brooded stores,
Nor on all profusely pours;
Lord of every regal art,
Liberal hand, and open heart,

* From Mr. EVANS's specimens of the Welch Poetry, London, 1764, quarto. Owen succeeded his father Griffin in the principality of North Wales, A. D. 1120. This battle was fought near forty years afterwards.

† North Wales.

Big

Big with hofts of mighty name,
 Squadrons three againft him came ;
 This the force of Eirin hiding,
 Side by fide as proudly riding,
 On her fhadow long and gay
 * Lochlin plows the wat'ry way ;
 There the Norman fails afar
 Catch the winds, and join the war :
 Black and huge along they fweep,
 Burthens of the angry deep.

Dauntlefs on his native fands
 † The Dragon-Son of Mona ftands ;
 In glitt'ring arms and glory drest,
 High he rears his ruby creft.
 There the thund'ring ftrokes begin,
 There the prefs, and there the din ;
 Talymalfra's rocky fhore
 Echoing to the battle's roar.
 ‡ Check'd by the torrent-tide of blood
 Backward Meinai rolls his flood ;

* Denmark.

† The red Dragon is the device of Cadwallader, which all his defcendants bore on their banners.

‡ This and the three following lines are not in the former editions, but are now added from the author's MS.

While

While, heap'd his master's feet around,
Prostrate Warriors gnaw the ground.
Where his glowing eye-balls turn,
Thousand Banners round him burn.
Where he points his purple spear,
Hasty, hasty Rout is there,
Marking with indignant eye
Fear to stop, and shame to fly.
There Confusion, Terror's child,
Conflict fierce, and Ruin wild,
Agony, that pants for breath,
Despair and honourable Death.

ODE

O D E X.

THE DEATH OF HOEL.

FROM THE WELCH*.

HAD I but the torrent's might,
With headlong rage and wild affright
Upon Deira's squadrons hurl'd,
'To rush, and sweep them from the world!

Too, too secure in youthful pride
By them my friend, my Hoel, died,
Great Cian's Son: of Madoc old
He ask'd no heaps of hoarded gold;
Alone in Nature's wealth array'd,
He ask'd, and had the lovely Maid.

* Of Aneurim, styled the Monarch of the Bards. He flourished about the time of Talieffin, A. D. 570. This Ode is extracted from the Gododin, (See Mr. Evans's Specimens, p. 71 and 73), and now first published.

T

To

To Cattræth's vale in glitt'ring row
Twice two hundred Warriors go ;
Every Warrior's manly neck
Chains of regal honour deck,
Wreath'd in many a golden link :
From the golden cup they drink
Nectar, that the bees produce,
Or the grape's extatic juice.
Flush'd with mirth, and hope they burn :
But none from Cattræth's vale return,
Save Aeron brave, and Conan strong,
(Bursting thro' the bloody throng)
And I, the meanest of them all,
That live to weep, and sing their fall.

O D E X.

F O R M U S I C *.

I R R E G U L A R.

“ HENCE, avaunt, ('tis holy ground)
 “ Comus, and his midnight-crew,
 “ And Ignorance with looks profound,
 “ And dreaming Sloth of pallid hue,
 “ Mad Sedition's cry profane,
 “ Servitude that hugs her chain,
 “ Nor in these consecrated bowers
 “ Let painted Flatt'ry hide her serpent-train
 “ in Flowers,
 “ Nor Envy base, nor creeping Gain
 “ Dare the Muse's walk to stain,

* This Ode was performed in the Senate-house at
 Cambridge, July 1, 1769, at the Installation of his Grace
 Augustus-Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton, Chancellor
 of the University,

T 2

“ While

“ While bright-eyed Science watches round;
 “ Hence, away, ’tis holy ground!”

II.

From yonder realms of empyrean day
 Bursts on my ear th’ indignant lay:
 There sit the fainted Sage, the Bard divine,
 The few, whom Genius gave to shine
 Through every unborn age, and undiscover’d
 clime.

Rapt in celestial transport they:
 Yet hither oft a glance from high
 They send of tender sympathy
 To bless the place, where on their opening soul
 First the genuine ardor stole.
 ’Twas Milton struck the deep-ton’d shell,
 And, as the choral warblings round him swell,
 Meek Newton’s self bends from his state sub-
 lime,
 And nods his hoary head, and listens to the
 rhyme.

III.

“ Ye brown o’er-arching Groves,
 “ That Contemplation loves,
 “ Where willowy Camus lingers with delight!
 “ Oft

" Oft at the blush of dawn
 " I trod your level lawn,
 " Oft woo'd the gleam of Cynthia silver-bright
 " In cloisters dim, far from the haunts of Folly,
 " With Freedom by my Side, and soft-ey'd
 " Melancholy."

IV.

But hark! the portals sound, and pacing forth
 With solemn steps and slow,
 High Potentates, and Dames of royal birth,
 And mitred Fathers in long order go:
 Great * Edward with the lillies on his brow
 From haughty Gallia torn,
 And † sad Chatillon, on her bridal morn

* Edward the Third; who added the fleur de lys of France to the arms of England. He founded Trinity College.

† Mary de Valentia, Countess of Pembroke, daughter of Guy de Chatillon Comte de St. Paul in France: of whom tradition says, that her husband Audemar de Valentia, Earl of Pembroke, was slain at a Tournament on the day of his nuptials. She was the Foundress of Pembroke College or Hall, under the name of Aula Mariæ de Valentia.

That

That wept her bleeding Love, and princely
 * Clare,
 And † Anjou's Heroine, and ‡ the paler Rose,
 The rival of her crown, and of her woes,
 And § either Henry there,
 The murder'd Saint, and the majestic Lord,
 That broke the bonds of Rome.
 (Their tears, their little triumphs o'er,
 Their human passions now no more,
 Save Charity, that glows beyond the tomb)
 All that on Granta's fruitful plain
 Rich streams of regal bounty pour'd,

* Elizabeth de Burg, Countess of Clare, was Wife of John de Burg, son and heir of the Earl of Ulster, and daughter of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, by Joan of Acres, daughter of Edward the First. Hence the Poet gives her the epithet of 'Princely.' She founded Clare Hall.

† Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry the Sixth, foundress of Queen's College. The Poet has celebrated her conjugal fidelity in *The Bard*, epode 2d, line 13th.

‡ Elizabeth Widville, wife of Edward the Fourth (hence called the paler rose, as being of the House of York). She added to the foundation of Margaret of Anjou.

§ Henry the Sixth and Eighth. The former the founder of King's, the latter the greatest benefactor to Trinity College.

And

And bad these awful fanes and turrets rise,
 To hail their Fitzroy's festal morning come;
 And thus they speak in soft accord
 The liquid language of the skies.

V.

"What is Grandeur, what is Power?
 "Heavier toil, superior pain.
 "What the bright reward we gain?
 "The grateful memory of the Good.
 "Sweet is the breath of vernal shower,
 "The bee's collected treasures sweet,
 "Sweet music's melting fall, but sweeter yet
 "The still small voice of Gratitude."

VI.

Foremost and leaning from her golden cloud
 The * venerable Marg'ret see!
 "Welcome, my noble Son, (she cries aloud)
 "To this, thy kindred train, and me:

* Countess of Richmond and Derby; the Mother of Henry the Seventh, foundress of St. John's and Christ's Colleges.

"Pleas'd

" Pleas'd in thy lineaments we trace
 " * A Tudor's fire, a Beaufort's grace.
 " Thy liberal heart, thy judging eye,
 " The flower unheeded shall descry,
 " And bid it round heav'n's altars shed
 " The fragrance of its blushing head:
 " Shall raise from earth the latent gem
 " To glitter on the diadem.

VII.

" Lo, Granta waits to lead her blooming band,
 " Not obvious, not obtrusive, She
 " No vulgar praise, no venal incense flings;
 " Nor dares with courtly tongue refin'd
 " Profane thy inborn royalty of mind:
 " She reveres herself and thee.
 " With modest pride to grace thy youthful
 " brow
 " The laureate wreath, that † Cecil-wore, she
 " brings,

* The Countess was a Beaufort, and married to a Tudor; hence the application of this line to the Duke of Grafton, who claims descent from both these families.

† Lord Treasurer Burleigh was Chancellor of the University, in the reign of Q. Elizabeth.

" And

" And to thy just, thy gentle hand
 " Submits the Fasces of her sway,
 " While Spirits blest above and Men below
 " Join with glad voice the loud symphonious
 " lay.

VIII.

" Thro' the wild waves as they roar
 " With watchful eye and dauntless mien
 " Thy steady course of honour keep,
 " Nor fear the rocks, nor seek the shore;
 " The star of Brunswick smiles serene,
 " And gilds the horrors of the deep."

U

NOTES

N O T E S

O N
III

O D E XI.

ON THE INSTALLATION.

THIS Ode on the *Installation* does not appear to me, either in point of *lyrical dignity of composition*, *splendour of language*, *fertility of invention*, *regularity of arrangement*, or *pomp of machinery*, to be at all inferior to *Mr. Gray's* happiest and voluntary productions. And surely it must be regarded as a noble effort of poetic genius, when we consider the untoward circumstances of its birth. The fastidious sensibility of a free imagination revolts at the least appearance of constraint, even at the gentle constraint of gratitude; and leaves with unspeakable reluctance its spontaneous excursions for the confinement of a stated subject.

Πας γὰρ ἀναγκαῖον πρᾶγμα ἀνάσκει σφῶ.

“Every degree of necessity, (says the ancient adage,) excites aversion and disgust.”

Many readers will receive an additional pleasure, peculiar to themselves, from those reflections, which will naturally

naturally be suggested from the local scenery of this Ode, and the personages which it celebrates. Some abatements, therefore, may possibly be made by the neutrality of a stranger, from their judgement of it's excellence, which is so likely to be perverted by partial associations. Indeed candour must acknowledge the irregularity of it's measures to be a real blemish: not arising, I apprehend, from the cause alledged by *Mr. Mason*, "the ease of execution, when the regularly repeated stanza, and still more (still *less* he should have said) the regular succession of *strophe*, *antistrophe*, and *epode*, put a curb on the imagination:" but from another source; which is, that the ear is no sooner familiarized to the conduct of one stanza, than it is disappointed and perplexed by the introduction of a stranger. As for the *epode*, in my opinion, that would be better banished altogether from *English* poetry, especially in Odes of a long stanza: as the use of it is only a nearer approximation to that total irregularity, which is so justly liable to censure,

Verse 1. Hence, avaunt!

This exordium awakens and animates the attention, and forms a very pleasing contrast with the majestic tranquillity of the next stanza; in which respects it resembles the opening of the *Bard*.

Verse 2. Comus and his midnight crew.

"Mean while welcome joy, and feast,

"Midnight shout, and revelry,

"Tiptly dance, and jollity." *Comus*, 102.

Verse 3. And Ignorance, with looks profound.

This is well characterized; and it may be thought remarkable, that the same undistinguishing steadfastness of features is alike the indication of a vacant mind and of profound thoughtfulness.

Verse 7. Nor in these consecrated bowers.

“Near to her close and consecrated bower.”

Midf. Night's Dream.

Verse 8. Let painted Flattery, &c.

This is justly and beautifully emblematical, and presents a very glowing picture to the fancy. Indeed the whole stanza is an excellent specimen of picturesque description.

Verse 11. While bright-eyed, &c.

Mr. Pope's expression of this idea is rather more elegant,

“Shrines! where their vigils pale-eyed virgins keep.”

“—bright-eyed fancy.” *Progress of Poetry.*

Verse 14. Bursts on my ear—

This verse is constructed with a cadence very judiciously correspondent to the idea.

Verse 15. This assemblage of the great ornaments of virtue and of genius is a magnificent exhibition, and happily suited to the place of that solemnity, which gave birth to this ode.

But impartiality will not allow me to pass by unnoticed a metrical blemish in this stanza, which is no small disparagement to the composition of so accurate a writer as *Mr. Gray*. The rhymes—*divine—shine—*and *clime—*are not sufficiently distinct to stand without offence so near together: and *clime* is at much too great a distance from
the

the correlative terminations—*sublime*—*rhyme*—at the end of the stanza, to answer the expectation of the ear. And this objection affects two other stanzas of this ode.

Verse 17. Unborn age.

The poet, I presume, means, that this is the general residence, appointed for the ornaments of human kind, of whatever age or country: and does not intend to represent, by anticipation, future worthies, as already stationed there, in imitation of the *Metempsychosis* in the sixth *Æneid* of *Virgil*.

Verse 18. Rapt in celestial transport,

“As the rapt seraph, that adores and burns.” *Pope*.

Verse 22. —the genuine ardor stole.

This is happily expressed.

Verse 23. ’Twas Milton.

This specification of the two most exalted characters, that ever ennobled human nature, is very judicious: and it was a fortunate circumstance for our poet, that they gave the first display of their stupendous powers on that theatre, upon which his Muse was to introduce them.—The description of *Newton* in particular is finely adapted to the person and character of that extraordinary man.

Verse 26. And nods his hoary head.

“E’en mitred Rochester would nod the head.” *Pope*.

Verse 27. Ye brown—

This stanza spoken by *Milton* is judiciously distributed into the same measure, as that in which the great poet composed

composed his sublime *Hymn on the Nativity*; except that the last verse but one in *Mr. Gray's* sonnet is longer by two syllables than the corresponding verse in his original.

——o'er-arching groves.

'The scenery is improved, we will suppose, since *Milton's* time.

" Nuda nec arva plateant umbrasque negantia mollis :
" Quam malè Phœbitolis convenit ille locus !"

Verse 28. That Contemplation loves.

" But first, and chiefest, with thee bring,
" Him that yon soars on golden wing,
" Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
" The Cherub *Contemplation.*" *Il Penseroso.*

This imagery of *Milton* seems to be derived from some passages in *Ezekiel* and other parts of Scripture.

Verse 29. Where willowy—

A pleasing thought, and with great dexterity appropriated to the longer verse of the stanza, which is uncommonly smooth and musical.

Verse 30. Oft at the blush of dawn.

We have *Milton's* own testimony to the truth of this assertion in his *Lycidas*.

" For we were nurs'd upon the self-same hill,
" Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill.
" Together both, e'er the high lawns appear'd
" Under the opening eye-lids of the Morn,
" We drove a-field, and both together heard
" What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,

" Batt'ning

- " Batt'ning our flocks with the fresh dews of night
 " Oft till the star that rose, at evening, bright,
 " Tow'rd heaven's descent had stop'd his westring wheel."

Verse 23.

What a profusion of poetical beauty is here! But surely *Mr. Gray's* imitation of this passage in his *Elegy* is no wise inferior.

- " Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn,
 " Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
 " To meet the sun upon the upland lawn."

And in the remaining part of this stanza there are other references to the *Penferse*:

- " To arched walks of twilight groves,
 " And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
 " Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
 " Most musical, most melancholy!
 " Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
 " I woo, to hear thy even-song;
 " And, missing thee, I walk unseen
 " On the dry smooth-shaven green,
 " To behold the wand'ring Moon,
 " Riding near her highest noon.
-
- " But let my due feet never fail,
 " To walk the studious cloysters pale."

These thoughts call to remembrance some enthusiastic strains of *Mr. Pope*:

- " I love through consecrated walks to rove,
 " And hear soft music die along the grove.
 " Led by the sound I roam from shade to shade,
 " By god-like Poets venerable made."

Verse

Verse 35. But hark!

This sudden conversion of the subject is animated in the highest degree, and sets the object in full view before us: and the stateliness of the measures keeps pace with the dignity of the subject.

The visionary procession of the worthies and benefactors of the *University*, which is here exhibited with so much solemnity, is extremely interesting, and a noble effort of our poet's imagination. In my opinion, nothing is so well calculated to engage the feelings, and to gratify the understanding at the same time, as this union of historical truth with poetical invention: which *Mr. Gray* has happily accomplished on other occasions.

Verse 36. With solemn steps and slow.

“—with wand'ring steps and slow.” *Milton.*

Verse 48. Their tears, &c.

In these three verses, all the graces of poetic diction are employed to their best end, the recommendation of a sublime morality. What an edifying lesson is here inculcated! What a severe reproof is here given, of those absurd and petty animosities, which embitter human life!—How vain are those triumphs which will so soon be over! How unwise those resentments, which can only serve to encrease our shame, and aggravate our punishment hereafter!

—Their human passions.

A fine expression! a common author might have said—*their HATEFUL passions*, or some other discriminate epithet of a similar signification: but *Mr. Gray* comprehends

hends every thing in one word,—*their* HUMAN *passions*. But these more delicate beauties escape the gross sight of vulgar readers.

Mr. Pope has given us an example of this propriety, which the circumstances of the passage render still more beautiful, than this instance in *Mr. Gray*.

“ From the full choir when loud hosannas rise,
 “ And swell the pomp of dreadful sacrifice ;
 “ Amid that scene if some relenting eye
 “ Glance on the stone where our cold relics lie,
 “ Devotion’s self shall steal a thought from heav’n ;
 “ One *human tear* shall drop, and be forgiv’n.” *Eloisa*.

What can imagination conceive more truly natural and pathetic! Amidst all this pomp of religious celebration, when the rapt soul is absorbed in the contemplation of heavenly things, far above the thoughts and passions of mortality, a casual glance on this grave *unspheres* her in a moment, revives her accustomed passions, supplants these spiritual meditations, and calls forth one tear of *humanity* to lament the fate of these unhappy lovers!

Save Charity, that glows beyond the tomb.

“ Charity never faileth.” *St. Paul*.

Verse 56. The liquid language.

“ ——— Cui *liquidam* pater

“ *Vocem.*” *Hor.*

Verse 60. The grateful, &c.

A noble lesson of exhortation to those, who enjoy the benefits of their liberality, to employ them, in conformity to the intention of the donors, for the promotion of reli-

gion and learning: and not to the purposes of riot and sensuality.

Verse 61. Sweet is, &c.

These four verses are exquisitely beautiful; and that artful repetition of the word has an admirable effect: but the first praise of this kind is due to a speech of *Eve* in *Paradise Lost*, which is beauty and harmony itself: and because *English* poetry has nothing more exquisite to produce, I shall give it at full length for the gratification of the reader and myself.

“ Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
 “ With charm of earliest birds: pleasant the sun,
 “ When first on this delightful land he spreads
 “ His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
 “ Glist’ring with dew: fragrant the fertile earth
 “ After soft showers; and sweet the coming on
 “ Of grateful evening mild; then silent night
 “ With this her solemn bird, and this fair Moon,
 “ And these the gems of heaven, her starry train.
 “ But neither breath of morning, when she ascends
 “ With charm of earliest birds; nor rising sun
 “ On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,
 “ Glist’ring with dew; nor fragrance after showers;
 “ Nor grateful evening mild; nor silent night
 “ With this her solemn bird, nor walk by Moon,
 “ Or glittering star-light, without thee is sweet.”

P. Lost, iv. 641.

Milton might possibly owe some obligation to *Theocritus*, viii. 76.

Verse

Verse 64. The still small voice of gratitude.

“ After the fire a *still small voice.*” 1 *Kings*, xix. 12. which is pathetic indeed!—And we find much the same expressions again in a rejected stanza of the *Elegy*, which diffuses through the spirits an awe and complacency that cannot be described.

“ Hark! how the sacred calm, that breathes around,

“ Bids every fierce tumultuous passion cease;

“ In *still small accents* whisp'ring from the ground,

“ A grateful earnest of eternal peace!”

Verse 71. Thy liberal heart.

In these six verses, which are not more commendable for beauty of thought than simplicity of language, our author points out with infinite address the circumstances of his own case. The Duke of *Grafton*, with a disinterestedness and a magnanimity, not often found in courts, conferred on *Mr. Gray*, without any solicitation, the Professorship of *Modern History* in the University of *Cambridge*. A noble act of kindness! only to be recompensed by the reflexions of conscious virtue, and by *incense kindled at the flame* of such a *musè*. These *strains of immortality*, alike honourable to the author and the subject of them, will proclaim to future generations a *courtier's* liberality and a *poet's* gratitude.

But the coldness of impartial criticism must remark, that the common verb *descry* is not well applied to both *eye* and *heart*; because in one application the sense is *literal*; in the other, *metaphorical*. This impropriety of composition is very common in our best authors and the purest writers of antiquity; but cannot be justified by any authority whatsoever.

Verse 78. Not obvious, not obtrusive—

“ *Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retir'd.*”

Par. Loft, viii. 504.

I must observe, that the weight of the rhyme is most injudiciously thrown upon such a paltry and feeble word as *she*.

Verse 82. She reveres, &c.

Most admirably expressed, and a most dextrous escape from a dangerous by-path to the high-road of his subject! The idea was taken from that noble and refined precept of the ancient moralists, which we find in *Pythagoras's Golden Verses*:

—*καλῶν δὲ μάλισ' αἰσχροῦ σάβησον.*

And above all things reverence thyself.

The poet has indeed acquitted himself on this occasion, so embarrassing to an independent spirit, with exquisite delicacy and decorum.

Verse 83. With modest pride.

“ *Yielded with coy submission, modest pride.*”

Par. Loft, iv. 310.

Verse 85. Thy gentle hand.

“ *—lenibus imperiis.*” *Hor.*

—gentle sway.” *Milton.*

Verse 89. Through the wild waves as they roar.

“ *Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar.*”

Comus, 87.

This conclusion is very spirited and poetical.

Verse

Verse 92. Nor fear the rocks, nor seek the shore.

The deep follows just below: or the poet would have written—

Nor fear the *deep*, nor seek the shore—

which had been more accurate: for so his original:

“ Rectius vives, Licini, neque altum
 “ Sempèr urgendo, neque dum procellas
 “ Cautus horrefcis, nimum premendo
 “ Littus iniquum.” *Hor.*

Verse 96. The star, &c.

A fine figure, and excellently adapted to the passage.

There is a similar thought in the *Eloisa*, which is wrought up in a most exquisite strain of poetry.

“ Where awful arches make a noon-day night,
 “ And the dim windows shed a solemn light;
 “ Thine eyes diffus'd a reconciling ray,
 “ And gleams of glory brighten'd all the day.”

Milton's Penseroso furnished *Mr. Pope* with the first thought:

“ And storied windows richly dight,
 “ Casting a dim religious light.”

Dr. Johnson, as I observed before, objects to *Mr. Gray's* —*honed spring*. In these verses of *Milton* we have an instance of a similar formation of words, and a very happy instance too—*STORIED windows*; adopted by *Mr. Pope* in one of the sublimest passages of his *Essay on Man*.

“ The trophied arches, storied halls, invade.”

And

And this derivation of words, so far from being new or rare, occurs in every page of our best poets: and it is very fortunate, that the language will admit this improvement with so much ease.

ELEGY

E L E G Y

WRITTEN IN A

COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

THE Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind flowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the
 fight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The mopeing owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's
 shade,
 Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring
 heap,
 Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
 The rude Forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
 The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built
 shed,
 The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
 No more shall rouse them from their lowly
 bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
 No children run to lisp their fire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kifs to share.

Oft did the harvest to their fickle yield,
 Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
 How jocund did they drive their team afield!
 How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy
 stroke!

Let

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
 Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
 Await alike th' inevitable hour.
 The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to These the fault,
 If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
 Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted
 vault
 The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
 Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
 Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
 Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
 Hands, that the rod of empire might have
 sway'd,
 Or wak'd to extasy the living lyre.

Y

But

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
 Rich with the spoils of Time, did ne'er unroll;
 Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
 And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
 The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless
 breast

The little Tyrant of his fields withstood;
 Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
 Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood,

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
 The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
 And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad: nor circumscrib'd alone
 Their growing virtues, but their crimes con-
 fin'd;

Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to
hide,

To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame;
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife;
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture
deck'd,
Impløres the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd
muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around the strows,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,

Left the warm precincts of the chearful day,
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
Ev'n in our Ashes live their wonted Fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd
Dead,

Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred Spirit shall enquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed Swain may say,
' Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
' Brushing with hasty step the dews away
' To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

' There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
' That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
' His littleless length at noontide would he
' stretch,
' And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

' Hard

- Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
 • Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would
 • rove;
 • Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
 • Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless
 • love.
- One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
 • Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree;
 • Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
 • Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;
- The next with dirges due in sad array
 • Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him
 • born.
- Approach and read (for thou can'st read)
 • the lay,
 • Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.

T H E E P I T A P H.

HERE rests his head upon the lap of Earth
 A Youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown:
 Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
 And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompence as largely send:
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd)
a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,
The bosom of his Father and his God.)

NOTES

N O T E S

O N T H E

ELEGY IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

WE are at length come to that famous production of *Mr. Gray's* genius, in the commendation of which it is not possible for praise to be too liberal, and to transcend the expectation of the reader. I suppose, that the whole world cannot shew such a finished and pathetic poem, *Pope's Eloisa* alone excepted; which yet is not more original, though more fortunate in such a curious combination of incidents, as could hardly be expected to concur in one subject. The reasons of that universal approbation, with which this *Elegy* has been received, may be learned from the comprehensive encomium of *Dr. Johnson*:

“ It abounds with images, which find a mirror in every mind; and with sentiments, to which every bosom returns an echo.”

Verse 1. The Curfew, &c.

“ Oft on a plat of rising ground,
“ I hear the far-off Curfew sound,

“ Over

“ Over some wide-water'd shore,
 “ Swinging slow with sullen roar.” *Il Penseroso.*

This is excellently descriptive: but there is a particular and superior beauty in *Mr. Gray's—knell—the funeral sound of the departed day.* Young says somewhere in his *Night-Thoughts*:

“ It is the *knell* of my departed hours.”

Curfeu in *Milton's* manner—*couvre-feu*—seems to be the proper *orthography* of the word.

This initial stanza is very judiciously delivered with much simplicity both of sentiment and expression.

I once exercised myself, when a student in the University, in translating this *Elegy* into *Latin* verse: a task, not only far beyond my strength, but above the powers of the *Roman Elegy*, which is by no means adequate to the grandeur and dignity of the *English* poem. Where, however, I seem to have been tolerably successful in my attempt, I shall occasionally produce my version for the entertainment of the classical reader.

Vesper adest; lugubre sonat compaña: per agrum
 Bos reboans tardis flexibus urget iter.
 Fessa domum referens vestigia curvus arator,
 Orbe mihi vacuo dat tenebrisque frui.

Verse 2. The lowing herd—

———δειπνῆς ἔην, καὶ ἐπὶ πλοῦσι μῆλα
 Παροῦσιν ἐξ ἀγῶνι. *Hom. Od.* xvii. 170.

At night's approach, the numerous herds come in
 From all the fields.

And this thought is common in other poets.

Verse

Verse 5: Now fades the glimmering landscape.

An admirable description of *twilight* in few words.—
But nobody has excelled *Mr. Mason* upon this topic :

“ While through the west, where sinks the crimson day,

“ Meek twilight slowly fails, and waves her banners grey.”

Which is a very fine picture indeed; delineated with the utmost grace and majesty.

Verse 7. Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight.

“ ————— Ere the bat hath flown

“ His cloyster'd flight; ere to black Hecat's summons

“ The shard-born beetle with his drowsy hums

“ Hath rung night's yawning peal.” *Macbeth.*

Here is another of *Dr. Johnson's* modern words, as he would have us to believe them—CLOYSTER'D flight.

“ What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn.”

Lycidas.

Collins has imitated these passages in his *Ode to Evening.*

“ Now air is hush'd, save where the weak-ey'd bat

“ With short shrill shrieks flits by on leathern wing;

“ Or where the beetle winds

“ His small but fullen horn,

“ As oft he rises midst the twilight path

“ Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum.”

But none of these descriptions reach the excellence of *Mr. Gray's*—DRONING flight; which most happily expresses the *monotonous* buzz of that insect.

Verse 9: Save that—

This repetition, and this dwelling upon the subject, is very beautiful.

— Ivy-mantled tower.

“ ——— o'er which the *mantling* vine

“ Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps

“ Luxuriant.” *Par. Lost*, iv. 258.

“ Where round some mould'ring *tower* pale *ivy* creeps.”

Eloisa.

Verse 10. The mopeing owl, &c.

A fine picture! *Shakespear* somewhere speaks of a *dog* baying the MOON; and *Phillips* in his *Winter-Piece* at *Copenhagen*, says of the *Wolves*—

“ Or to the *Moon* in icy vallies howl.”

Which is from *Shakespear*:

“ And the *wolf* behowls the *Moon*.” *Midf. Night's Dr.*

Verse 11. — Her secret bower.

If one might venture to propose any alteration of such an admirable stanza, I should prefer—*silent bower*; as *secret* seems implied sufficiently in the *solitary* of the next verse.

Verse 12. — Her ancient solitary reign.

“ ————— *desertaque regna*

“ *Pastorum*.” *Virg. Geo.* iii.

Ni bubo insidens hederæ, quæ prodiga lapsu

Multiplici turris putre cacumen obit,

Cum Luna queritur, vetus incola, limina regni

Intempestivum præteriisse pedem.

Verse 13. The two last lines of this exquisite stanza are delightfully smooth and musical.

En!

En! rudium ulmorum toxique istius in umbra,
 Quà putrescentem subleuat herba sinum,
 Dormit, in æternum dormit, conclusa cubili
 Quisque suo, pagi, rustica turba, patres.

Verse 14. Where heaves the turf in, &c.

“ Those graves with bending osier bound,
 “ That nameless heave the crumbled ground.”

Parnell's Night-Piece.

Verse 17. The breezy call—

The *Scholiast* observes on this passage of *Apollonius Rhodius*—

————— ἐπὶ νύκτα
 Ἀγχαυρον κινωσασιν. iv. 110.

Which is *Mr. Gray's*

“ ————— slumbers light,
 “ That fly the approach of morn—”

Ἀγχαυρον, τον καιρον τον πλησιον της ἡμερας, ὡσπερ το καλημενον λυκοφως· περι γαρ τον τοιυτον καιρον αι αυραι πνευσι. Και τυλο δε εκ τῆ ποιησι.

Αυρη δ' εκ πλάμα ψυχρη πειλει ηωθι προ.

“ — the time near the day, called twilight: for at this
 “ time a breeze springs up.” And so the poet:

“ And river-breezes whisper morn's approach:”

which is from the *Odysssey*, v. 469.

“ ————— the noise
 “ Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan.”

Par. Lost, v. 5.

————— Incense-breathing morn.

“ And early, ere the *odorous breath of morn*,
 “ Awakes the slumbering leaves.” *Comus*, 56.
 “ Now when as sacred light began to dawn
 “ In Eden on the humid flowers, that *breath'd*
 “ *Their morning incense*, when all things that breathe
 “ From th' Earth's great altar send up silent praise
 “ To the Creator, and his nostrils fill
 “ With grateful smell, forth came the human pair,
 “ And join'd their vocal worship to the quire
 “ Of creatures wanting voice; that done, partake
 “ The season, prime for *sweetest scents and airs.*”

Par. Lost, ix. 192.

which are some of the most fragrant blossoms of poetry.

Verse 18. The swallow twitt'ring, &c.

“ The *swallow-people*—————there
 “ They *twitter* chearful.” *Thomson's Autumn*.

And *Anacreon* reproves the *loquacious swallow* for breaking his dreams with her *early twitterings*.

Verse 19. The cock's shrill clarion.

“ *The cock*, that is the *trumpet* to the morn,
 “ Doth with his lofty and *shrill-sounding* throat
 “ Awake the God of day.” *Hamlet*.
 “ While the *cock* with lively din
 “ Scatters the rear of darkness thin.” *L'Allegro*.
 “ — the crested *cock*, whose *clarion* sounds
 “ The silent hours.” *Par. Lost*, viii. 443.

—Or

— Or the echoing horn.

“ Oft list’ning, how the hounds and *horn*

“ Chearly rouse the slumb’ring morn,

“ From the side of some hoar hill

“ Through the high wood *echoing* shrill.” *L’ Allegro,*

Verse 20. No more—

“ There are few things, not purely evil, of which we
“ can say without some emotion of uneasiness, *this is the*
“ *last.*” *Idler, No. 103.*

This pensive idea inspired those pathetic strains of *Mof-*
thus on the death of his brother poet:

Αι, αι, ται μαλαχαι μιν επαν καλα καπον ολωνιαι,

Η τα χλωρα σιλινα, το ἴ ευθαλες υλοι ανθου,

Υγερον αυ ζωοντι, κ’ εις εἶθε αλλο φυοντι·

Αμμις δ’ οι μεγαλοι κ’ καθιεροι η σοφοι ανδρες,

Οκποτε πρωτα θαναμις ανακοοι εν χθονι κοιλα

Ευδομις εν μαλα μακρον αλερμονα νηγξιον υπνου.

Each herb, alas! that withers on the green,
Each flower, of odorous scent or purple hue,
Wakes to new life at the soft call of spring.

We men, the great, the puissant, and the wise!
Chill’d by the touch of death, unseen, unknown
Sleep in the grave an everlasting night!

This passage *Dr. Fortin* in his poems has elegantly translated, not without some amplification: I quote from memory.

“ Hei mihi! lege rata fol occidit atque refurgit,

“ Lunaque mutata reparat dispendia formæ:

“ Sidera, purpurei telis extincta diei,

“ Rursus nocte vigent: humiles telluris alumni,

“ Graminis

*Not yet for the ravage of winter's down,
Kind nature the emerald blossom will cease
But when shall spring visit the mountains
Ah when shall light dawn on the sea!*

" Graminis herba virens, et florum picta propago,
 " Quos crudelis hyems lethali tabe peredit;
 " Cum Zephyri vox blanda vocat, rediitque fereni
 " Temperies anni, redivivo è cespite surgunt.
 " Nos, Domini rerum! nos, magna et pulchra minati!
 " Cum breve ver vitæ robustaque transiit æstas,
 " Deficimus: neque nos ordo revolubilis auras
 " Reddit in ætherias, tumuli nec claustra resolvit."

They are written in the true stile of *Lucretius* and *Virgil*.

The same sentiment is beautifully represented in the Book of *Job*.

" For there is hope of a tree, that, if it be cut down,
 " it will renew it's form;
 " And that it's tender shoots will not fail;
 " Though it's root grow old in the ground,
 " And its trunk perish in the dust;
 " From the scent of water it will bud afresh,
 " And put forth it's foliage, like a young plant:
 " But, when a mortal dies, he decays for ever;
 " When a man perisheth, he is no more."

So *Catullus*:

" Soles occidere et redire possunt;
 " Nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux,
 " Nox est perpetua una dormienda."

The setting sun repairs his wasted beams,
 And shines anew: when our short day is past,
 The gloom of one long endless night succeeds,

And *Horace* has borrowed the same thought:

" Damna tamèn celeres reparant cælestia lunæ:
 " Nos, ubi decidimus

"An homo ovis? music wake the dead" Qu
 give the old eye its vision again...
 Longfellow's *Queen of Carra*

“ Quo pius Æneas, quo dives Tullus, et Ancus,
“ Pulvis et umbra fumus.”

I will beg the reader's indulgence, whilst I quote one more passage from the Father of Poetry; which, however, will amply reward his patience with it's inimitable beauties; beauties very inadequately seen through the medium of *Mr. Pope's* version, who probably did not apprehend that fine turn of words in the original.

Ουδεν γαρ ψυχης αλαξιον, εδ' οσα φασιν
 Ωλιον εκησθαι, ευναιομενον πολυιεθρον,
 Το πριν επ' ειρηνης, πριν ελθειν υιας Αχαιιον·
 Ουδ' οσα λαϊν· εδ· αφηλο· ενι· εεργω
 Φοιβη Απολλων· πυθοι ενι περιηεσση.
 Ληισοι μεν γαρ τε βοες η πιονα μηλα,
 Κτηλιο δε τριποδες τε η ιππον ξανθα καρηνα·
 Ανδρ· δε ψυχη παλιεν ελθειν εις ληιση
 Ουθ' ιλαλε, επει αρ κεν αμειψιλαι ερε· οδοιων.

“ Life is not to be bought with heaps of gold:
 “ Not all Apollo's Pythian treasures told,
 “ Or Troy once held, in peace and pride of sway,
 “ Can bribe the poor possession of a day.
 “ Lost herds and cattle we by force regain,
 “ And steeds, unrivall'd on the dusty plain;
 “ But from our lips the vital spirit fled
 “ Returns no more to wake the silent dead.” *Pope.*

— Their lowly bed.

Some readers, keeping in mind the *narrow cell* above-mentioned, have mistaken the *lowly bed* in this verse for the *grave*; as, if I rightly recollect, *Lloyd* has done in his *Latin* translation of the *Elegy*: a most puerile and ridiculous blunder!

“ Jam

- “ Jam neque sol rediens, Zephyrive sulcibus odori;
 “ Nec quæ stramineo sub lare garrat avis;
 “ Nec galli strepitus, neque rauci murmura cornu
 “ Excitant humili mascula membra toro.”

This and the three preceding stanzas are parodied with so much humour in *an Evening Contemplation in a College*, that they cannot fail to divert the reader.

- “ Now shine the spires beneath the paly moon,
 “ And through the cloister peace and silence reign;
 “ Save where some fiddler scrapes a drowsy tune,
 “ Or copious bowls inspire a jovial train.
- “ Save that in yonder cobweb-mantled room,
 “ Where lies a student in profound repose,
 “ Oppress'd with ale, wide-echoes through the gloom
 “ The droning music of his vocal nose.
- “ Within those walls, where thro' the glimmering shade
 “ Appear the pamphlets in a mouldering heap,
 “ Each in his narrow bed till morning laid,
 “ The peaceful fellows of the college sleep.
- “ The tinkling bell proclaiming early prayers,
 “ The noisy servant ratt'ling o'er their head,
 “ The calls of business and domestic cares,
 “ Ne'er rouse these sleepers from their downy bed.”

I am sorry to add, that the parody is in part, what the original is altogether, *truth and nature*.

Verse 21. For them, &c.

This stanza, which is tenderness itself, owes some obligations to former poets. Similar circumstances of domestic assiduity and love are thus depicted by *Lucretius*:

“ At

“ At jam non domus accipiet te læta; neque uxor
 “ Optima, nec dulcēs occurrent oscula nati
 “ Præripere, et tacita pectus dulcedine tangent.” iv. 907.

But thou thy pleasing home wilt see no more;
 Nor will thy wife and lovely children run
 To snatch thy kifs, and soothè thy secret soul
 With blifs unspeakable.

“ Intereâ dulces pendent circum oscula nati.”

Virg. Geo. ii. 523.

Whilst thy sweet children hang upon thy kifs.

which is very beautiful. *Thomson* upon the man perishing in the snow:

“ In vain for him the officious wife prepares
 “ The fire fair-blazing and the vestment warm:
 “ In vain his little children, peeping out
 “ Into the mingling storm; demand their fire
 “ With tears of artless innocence. Alas!
 “ Nor wife, nor children, more shall he behold,
 “ Nor friends, nor sacred home.” *Winter, 311.*

Horace has given us a few touches of the same picture:

“ Quòd si pudica mulier in partem juvenis
 “ Domum atque dulces liberos,
 “ Sacrum vestutis extruat lignis focum
 “ Lassi sub adventum viri.” *Epod. ii. 39.*

It is not easy to determine to which the preference is due, to *Lucretius*, *Thomson*, or *Gray*. The comparison is more exact between *Lucretius* and *Gray*: because *Thomson's* subject allowed scope for some beauties peculiar to itself. *Mr. Gray's* improvements will, perhaps, scarcely counterbalance the *præripere*—which so naturally represents the

children's eagerness to snatch the first kiss—and the *tacita dulcedine*—the *heartfelt transport*—of the sublime *Roman*.

Non illis ultra genialis flamma micebit,
 Non uxor solitum nocte movebit opus.
 Non ultra reditum crepitans balbo ore propago
 Oscula præripiet pensilis ore patris.

Verse 27. ——— drive their team afield.

“ We drove afield.” *Lycidas*.

How jocund—*how* bow'd—

“ *Ut gaudet* insitiva decerpens pyra!” *Hor.*

Sæpè seges falci matura cessit arista;
 Lustantem vomer sæpè revellit humum.
 Ut læti per agros agitarent plaustra! sub ictu
 Poneret ut valido silva recisa comas!

The parody of this stanza is very diverting.

“ Oft have they bask'd along the sunny walls;
 “ Oft have the benches bow'd beneath their weight;
 “ How jocund are their looks, when dinner calls!
 “ How smoke the cutlets on their crowded plate!”

Verse 28. *How* bow'd the woods, &c.

“ But to the root bent his *sturdie stroake*,
 “ And made many wounds in the waste oak.”

Spencer's February.

Verse 29. Let not Ambition, &c.

“ ————— nor ye, who live
 “ In luxury and ease, in pomp and pride
 “ Think these lost themes unworthy of your ear.”

Thomson's Spring.

Nec

Nec temnat pulchros indignabunda labores
 Ambitio, et lufus, et fine laude vicem :
 Nec gens excipiat rifu trabeata maligno
 Annales nudos hiftoriamque brevem,

Verfe 33. The boast of heraldry,

We may obferve, what an appearance of novelty our author has conferred on a common-place topic by the fplendour of his diction, and a beautiful but fimple figure :

The paths of glory lead but to the grave!

Quicquid nobilitas, quicquid tibi forma decori
 Largitur, quicquid gloria, quicquid opes,
 Supremum expectant et ineluctabile tempus :
 In tumuli fauces ducit honoris iter.

Verfe 37. Not you, ye proud! *&c.*

This ftanza is ennobled by what our author calls *thrilling verfe*; an amazing fwelling and magnificence of expreffion, productive of thofe fenfations, which *Milton* will beft describe :

“ There let the *pealing organ* blow

“ To the full-voic'd quire below,

“ In fervice high and *anthems clear*,

“ As may with fweetnefs, thro' mine ear,

“ Diffolve me into extafies,

“ And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.” *Il Penf.*

“ When from the censer clouds of fragrance roll,

“ And *fwelling organs* lift the rifing foul.” *Eloifa.*

Sed neque, vos proceres, vitio date, nulla superbis

Si bufto radiant fculpta trophæa notis,

Quà longos per templi aditus laqueataque tecta,

Aerium ingeminant organa pulfa melos.

Verse 39. ——— fretted vault.

“ ——— The roof o' th' chamber

“ With golden cherubims is *fretted.*” *Cymbeline.*

Verse 41. Can storied urn—

“ Non, Torquate, genus, non te facundia, non te

“ Restituet pietas.” *Hor.*

Nor can thy eloquence, nor noble birth,

Nor e'en thy virtues give thee back to life.

Num fugientem animam vivus de marmore vultus,

Ad solitam revocat num memor urna domum?

An linguæ blandis mors est aurita loquelis?

Aut poterit laudis voce calere cinis?

Verse 46. Some heart once pregnant, &c.

Longinus, who is remarkable for a richness and sublimity of language, has the same metaphor:

Ἐξ—τας ψυχὰς ἀναλεῖθαι πρὸς τὰ μεγάλα, καὶ ὡσπερ ἐγκυμοῦσας ποιεῖν γυνναῖα παρασημαῖοι. *De Sub. ix.*

“ We ought to prepare and foster our souls for the reception of sublime ideas, and to make them *pregnant*, as it were, with these generous affections.”

Cor pregnans olim divinæ femine flammæ

Hæc fortassè tegit gleba inhonora sinu:

Fortè manus, sceptrum imperii gestasse capaces,

Aut strepitus vivas elicuisse lyrà.

And, if any one should think this last too harsh an expression, let him recollect this of *Horace*:

“ O! testudinis aurea

“ Dulcem quæ *strepitum*, Pieri, temperas.

Verse

Verse 51. — their noble rage—

“ — Your native *rage*.” *Pope*.

It is an excellent word, taken from the *αγγη* of the *Greeks*.

Verse 53. — purest ray serene.

This is no superfluity of words, in order to eke out the verse, and to supply the rhyme: but a most happy description of the *mild radiance* of the *pearl*, that *gem*, which the *ocean bears*, or produces.

Verse 55. Full many a flower, &c.

“ There kept my charms conceal'd from mortal eye;

“ Like *roses* that in *deserts bloom* and die.”

Rape of the Lock, iv. 157.

But *Mr. Gray* has much improved the thought.

These verses of *Pope* call to mind two stanzas, which have been composed to come in somewhere in this part of the *Elegy*: but one of them only is worthy of preservation.

“ Some lovely fair, whose unaffected charms

“ Shone with attraction to herself unknown;

“ Whose beauty might have bless'd a monarch's arms,

“ Whose virtue shed a lustre on a throne.”

Verse 56. — the desert air.

— *σημας δι αιθης*. *Pind.*

Multa sub oceani tenebrosis gemma latebris

Per specus occultum fundit inane jubar.

Purpurei in gremio nemoris rosa multa fugaces

Indelibato ditat odore Notos.

Verse

Verse 57. Some Village-Hampden.

What son of freedom is not in raptures with this tribute of praise to such an exalted character, in immortal verse? This honourable testimony and the noble detestation of arbitrary power, with which it is accompanied, might possibly be one cause of *Dr. Johnson's* animosity against our poet. Upon this topic, the critic's feelings, we know, were irritability itself, and *tremblingly alive all o'er.*

Verse 67. Forbade to wade, &c.

These two verses are a specimen of sublimity of the purest kind, like the simple grandeur of *Hebrew* poetry; depending solely on the *thought*, unassisted by epithets and the artificial decorations of expression.

Shakespear has something of the same idea; "I'll turn
" my mercy out of doors." *Tempest*, iii. 2.

Verse 69. The struggling pangs—

I cannot help thinking, that the construction is too long suspended in this place, and the connection between this exquisite stanza and the verb, somewhat too remote and indistinct. I endeavoured to avoid this want of perspicuity, in my translation.

Non artes pressere malæ læstamina veri

Conficia; non castam de didicere genam.

Nec sacra luxuriæ tulerunt, ad divitis aræ

Indociles musæ thura cremare focos.

Verse 73. Far from, &c.

Spes procùl à strepitu, procùl à certamine vulgi

Non humilis limen transfiliere casæ

Uno per tacitæ jucunda oblivia vallis
Fallentem tenuit vita tenore viam.

Verse 77. Yet e'en these bones—

Qui tamèn opprobrium cineri defendere possit,
Hæc etiam fragilis stat super ossa lapis :
Sculpturaque rudi et malè culto carmine mundus,
Elicit ex oculo prætereuntis aquam.

Verse 82. There is a small blemish in this stanza, which is rather unpleasant to the ear: the words—*supply* and *die*—are too near the correspondent rhymes of the preceding stanza, which have a similar termination—*nigh*—*high*.

The place of fame and elegy.

“ ——— furgit miserabile bustum
“ Non ullis plenum titulis, non ordine tanto
“ Fæstorum : solitumque legi super alta deorum
“ Culmina et extructos, spoliis hostilibus arcus,
“ Haud procul est ima Pompeii nomen arena.”

Luc. Phars. viii. 816.

——— There stands his wretched tomb!
Ungrac'd by titles and the long display
Of glorious deeds: that name, which erst so oft
Emblazon'd temples and the trophied arch,
Now marks a stone upon a desert strand.

A passage, which has as great a resemblance to a former stanza of the *Elegy*.

Indocili musa nomen signatur, et ætas;
Non celebrant tituli, non elegia dolet :
Multaque de sacro documenta volumine circum
Inserit, ut discat rustica turba mori,

Verse

Verse 85. For who—

This and the next pathetic stanza shine out with peculiar lustre even amidst a profusion of brightness; and address the feelings with the very *voice of nature*.

Verse 87. —the warm precincts of the cheerful day.

A fine improvement on the original:

“ — *dias in luminis oras.*” *Lucret. i. 23.*

— the divine *precincts of the light*:

Verse 88. Nor cast, &c.

Inimitably expressive and affecting!—*Virgil*, speaking of the vanquished bull, has a fine stroke of nature of the same kind.

“ *Et stabula aspectans regnis excessit avitis.*”

With *one last look* he quits his ancient reign.

But there is a pathetic passage in *Euripides*, which has a striking resemblance to this admirable stanza.

— φθίνει γὰρ, καὶ μαραινεῖται νοσῶ:

Παρειμένη δε χεὶρ ἀδλιον ἄρα,

Ὅμως δε, καὶ περ σμικροῖ εμπνεῖσ' ἔτι,

Βλεψαι πρὸ αὐγῆς βλεταὶ τὰς ἡλίου,

Ὡς κ' αὐτὸς αὐτὸς, ἀλλὰ νῦν παρυσάλω,

Ἀλίνα κυκλονθ' ἡλιὸ προσψήϊω. *Alcest. 201.*

The malady slow-pining wastes her strength!
 Dropp'd is her feeble hand! yet still, though life
 Seems at it's lowest ebb,—yet still she strives
 With straining eye to catch the light of day:
 Still longs to turn one last, one ling'ring look
 On that bright sun, which shines for her no more!

Verse

Verse 90. Some pious drops.

Conformable to this sentiment is the wish of *Solon*:

Μηδὲ μοι ἀκλαυτὸς θανάτος μολοῖ· ἀλλὰ φίλοις

Καλλοποιεῖς θάνατον ἀλγέα ἢ γοηχάτι.

Oh! may some pitying friend lament my death;

And shed the dew of sorrow on my grave!

Verse 92. E'en in our ashes—

“ Ch' i veggio nel pensier, dolce mio fuoco,

“ Fredda una lingua, et due begli occhi chiusi

“ Rimaner d'oppo noi pien di faville.”

Petrarch, Son. 169. Gray.

Mr. Mason expresses himself dissatisfied with this line, and prefers the reading of the first editions:

“ Awake, and faithful to her wonted fires.”

Now, in the first place—*wonted fires*—thus unconnected, is but a very clumsy phrase; and, in the next place, what sort of an idea is being *faithful to a fire*? It is inconsistency and nonsense. And the line, which he proposes by way of explanation is but insipid, though there is no incongruity of *metaphor*:

“ Awake, and faithful to her first desires.”

But whence arises his discontent with the verse as it now stands? There is, it seems, “ an appearance of quaintness;” from the *antithesis*, I presume, of *ashes* and *fires*. Now this censure betrays great want of taste and judgment: for the allusion is extremely beautiful and unexceptionably just. It is founded upon a very familiar appearance;—of a *fire*, seemingly *extinct*, still latent and vigorous beneath the *ashes*. *Horace* says:

“ ——— incedis per ignes

“ suppositos cineri doloso.”

You tread on *fire* beneath the *ashes* hid.

B b

Virgil;

Virgil:

“ ——— cinerem et sopitos fuscitat ignes.”

Awakes the *ashes* and the *sleeping fires*.

And Theocritus in the same manner—

——— ἴτω σποδῶ ἀκαμάλων πυρ. *Id.* xi.

But, says our ingenious editor, (who will excuse this freedom in behalf of his friend)—“ He means to say, in plain
“ prose, that we wish to be remembered by our friends
“ after our death, in the same manner as when alive, we
“ wished to be remembered by them in our absence.”

I suppose, it were hardly possible to give a more meagre and inadequate account of the poet's meaning in this divine passage. Let the context speak his explanation for him.

“ Perhaps, says he, the pride of greatness and the conceit of philosophy, may fancy these humble swains to
“ have been strangers to the common feelings and passions
“ of humanity. No: even they wish some memorial of
“ their existence, however rude, to be erected over them:
“ still anxious to interest themselves, as far as possible, in
“ those scenes and pleasures, with which they have once
“ been so fondly conversant. For who ever resigned his
“ existence without regret? Who ever left his friends
“ and kindred without a wish to continue longer with
“ them? These anxious attachments stick to us to the
“ last:

“ These travel through, nor quit us when we die:
“ The *voice of nature* still *cries* from the *tomb*, in the language of the epitaph, inscribed on it, which still endeavours to connect us with the living:—the *fires* of
“ former affections and enjoyments are still *alive* beneath
“ *our ashes.*”

The reader, I hope, will look with indulgence upon this weak attempt to explain in flat prose one of the happiest and boldest flights, that poetry has ever taken.

Verse 99. Brushing with hasty steps, &c.

Much in the same manner *Thomson*:

- “ Oft let me wander o’er the dewy fields,
- “ Where freshness breathes, and dash the trembling drops
- “ From the bent bush, as through the verdant maze
- “ Of sweet-briar hedges I pursue my walk.” *Spring, 109.*

Verse 100. To meet the sun, &c.

There is as much animation, though not more poetry, as in *Milton*:

- “ ————— e’er the high lawns appear’d
- “ Under the opening eye-lids of the morn.” *Lycidas, 25.*

The *parody* of this stanza is full of truth and humour:

- “ Haply some friend may shake his hoary head,
- “ And say: ‘ Each morn, unchill’d by frosts, he ran
- “ With hose ungarter’d o’er yon turfy bed,
- “ To reach the Chapel e’er the Psalms began.’

Verse 101. There at the foot, &c.

- “ Propter aquæ rivum sub ramis arboris altæ.” *Lucret.*
- Near a brook shaded by a lofty tree.

Verse 104. ————— the brook that babbles by.

- “ ——— divided by a babbling brook.” *Th. Spring, 649.*

Several thoughts of this stanza are taken from *Shakespeare*:

- “ Under an oak, whose antique root peeps out . . .
- “ Upon the brook, which brawls along this wood.”

As You like it. a. 2. sc. 1.

which is an exquisite description, and particularly beautiful and animated is the idea of the root PEEPING OUT on the brook.

Quæ per gramineum sinuosa volumina fagus
Radicis nectit luxuriata torum;
A sole ætherio projectus inertia membra,
Spectabat rivi dulçe crepantis aquam.

Verse 107. Now drooping woful wan, &c.

So Spencer:

“ All as the sheepe, such was the shepheard's looke;
“ For pale and wanne he was; (alas the while!)
“ May seeme he lov'd, or else some care he tooke.”

January.

Verse 111. — Nor yet, &c.

This repetition is very beautiful. The noblest example of this kind in the whole compass of poetry was quoted from *Paradise Lost* on the *Ode upon the Installation*. The same sublime genius can furnish us with a similar beauty in *Paradise Regain'd*.

“ Up to a hill anon his steps he rear'd,
“ From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
“ If cottage were in view, sheep-cote, or herd;
“ But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote none he saw.”

ii. 285.

This passage of the *Elegy* somewhat resembles one in *Theocritus*:

— ἴσθ' ἄρα Δαφνίς, καὶ ἀνὶ ὕδασι,
ὄσσην ἄντα δρυμῶς, καὶ ἀλόσια. *Id.* i. 116.

Verse

Verse 114. — through the church-way path—

“ Now it is the time of night,
 “ That the graves, all-gaping wide,
 “ Every one lets forth his sprite,
 “ In the *church-way paths* to glide.”

Mids. Night's Dream.

Verse 116. Grav'd—

Ungrammatical: *graven* is the *participle*: and the gross carelessness of our best writers in this respect is greatly to be lamented.

Between this stanza and the epitaph was introduced in the first editions another stanza exquisitely beautiful and romantic.

There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year,
 By hands unseen, are showers of violets found:
 The Red-Breast loves to build and warble there,
 And little footsteps lightly print the ground.

Verse 2. Showers of violets—

“ ——— veil'd in a *shower*
 “ Of shadowing *roses*.” *Thomson*.

Lucretius is much bolder:—

“ ——— *ninguntque rosarum*
 “ *Floribus, umbrantes matrem comitumque catervos.*”

ii. 627.

——— Of *roses* they *snow down*
 A *shower*, the goddess *shadowing* and her train.

Chaucer says with still greater boldness:

“ It *snowed* in his house of meate and drinke.”

Prolog. to Cont. Tales.

Mr.

Mr. Pope has some verses to our purpose in his *Elegy*, beyond all expression tender and harmonious :

- “ What, though no weeping loves thy ashes grace,
 “ Nor polish'd marble emulate thy face?
 “ What, though no sacred earth allow thee room,
 “ Nor hallow'd dirge be mutter'd o'er thy tomb?
 “ Yet shall thy grave with rising flowers be dress'd,
 “ And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast.
 “ There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow;
 “ There the first roses of the spring shall blow.”

Yet *Lord Kaimes* calls this *indiscreet imitation*, and no *language of the heart!*—It was nothing else but a strange depravity of taste, like this, that so disgusted *Mr. Gray*, and left the discerning few to regret for ever those untoward circumstances, which intercepted so many *flowers of Paradise* from posterity.

O! sæclum insipiens et inficetum!

Verse 3. The red-breast loves, &c.

I find the first traces of this beautiful idea in an *Epitaph* upon *Timon* in the *Anthologia* :

Ως ἐπ' ἀπὸς μὴ δ' ὄρνις ἐν αἰατῇ κερφοῦ περὶ τοῦ

ΙΧΘ.

Nor print the feather'd warbler in the *Spring*
 His little *footstep* lightly on my grave.

Whether *Gray's Elegy*, or *Collins' Dirge* in *Cymbeline*, was prior in point of time, I cannot determine. This thought, which is found in both poems, is wrought up unquestionably to much greater perfection in the *Elegy*;—though I would not be understood by this preferencē to disparage the other poem, which breathes a genuine pathos,
 and

and is impressed with indubitable marks of an original wildness of imagination and true genius.

- “ To fair Fidele’s grassy tomb
 “ Soft maids and village-hinds shall bring
 “ Each opening sweet, of earliest bloom,
 “ And rife all the breathing spring.

- “ The *red-breast* oft at evening-hours
 “ Shall kindly lend his little aid,
 “ With hoary moss and gather’d flowers,
 “ To deck the ground where thou art laid.”

They might both have in view the *ballad* of their infancy:

- “ And *Robin Red-breast* carefully
 “ Did cover them with leaves.”

Mr. Gray’s extensive learning, which was of the politest kind, and his accurate judgement, gave his poetry that perfect finish which leaves it in this respect without a rival. I could soon shew this superiority by scrutinizing any poem, that should be proposed, with the same minuteness which has examined his, without any consciousness of paliating or correcting faults, in the course of the preceding observations. *Collins*—

- “ Had fortune smil’d propitious as his Muse—”

would have been the only cotemporary capable of attaining the excellence of *Mr. Gray*. His natural powers, his enthusiasm, and his feelings, seem to have qualified him for all that is sublime and beautiful in poetry. If I might be allowed the presumption of making one alteration only, I would oppose four stanzas in his verses on the Death of *Thomson* to any passage on a similar subject, that ever

was

was written. *Thomson* was buried at the church of *Richmond* in *Surry*: and the reader, who is acquainted with the place, will feel a double pleasure from a recollection of the surrounding scenery, which the poet has very accurately depicted. I quote the verses from memory:

- “ Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore,
 “ When Thames in Summer-wreaths is dress’d;
 “ And oft suspend the dashing oar
 “ To bid his gentle spirit rest.
 “ And oft as ease and health retire
 “ To breezy lawn or forest deep;
 “ The friend shall view yon whitening spire,
 “ And ’midst the varied landscape weep.
 “ But thou, who own’st that earthy bed,
 “ Ah! what will every dirge avail!
 “ Or tears that love and pity shed,
 “ That mourn beneath the gliding sail.
 “ Yet lives there one whose heedless eye
 “ Withholds the sympathetic tear?—
 “ With him, sweet bard! may Fancy die,
 “ And Joy desert the blooming year.”

Verse 119. Fair Science, &c.

This is an imitation of *Horace*:

- “ Quem tu, Melpomene, femel
 “ Nascentem placido lumine videris.”

The bard, whose birth, Melpomene! thine eye
 Once deign’d to view with a benignant look.

Verse

Verse 120. And Melancholy, &c.

A passage in *Æschylus* closely resembles this in its manner of expression:

Εἰ δ' ἢ Διὸς παῖς παρθένος· Δίκη παρθή
 Ἐργῶς ἐκείνη καὶ φρεσίν, τάχ' ἂν ἴοδ' ἠΐ
 Ἀλλ' ὅτε ἐν φυγοῖνιά μὴροθεν σκολοῖν,
 Οὐτ' ἐν προφασίαι, εἴ εἰρηβησάντι παῖς
 Οὐτ' ἐν γένου συλλογῇ τριχῶμαίῳ,
 Δίκη προσοιδὴ καὶ κἀλήξιωσαίῳ. *Sept. Theb.* 668.

If *Justice*, virgin-daughter of great Jove,
 Smil'd on his schemes, foon would they meet success.
 But him did *Justice*, neither at his birth,
 Nor in his infant nor maturer years,
 Vouchsafe a look, nor take him for her own.

Verse 127. — trembling hope—

— Paventosa speme. *Petrarch, Son.* 114. *Græc.*

“Spe trepido.” *Luc. Pharsf.* vii. 297.

I tremble with hope.

[*This Poem was rejected by Mr. Gray, in the Collection published by himself, but as it has been reinstated by his Executor, it is here inserted.*]

A L O N G S T O R Y *.

IN Britain's isle, no matter where,
An ancient pile of building stands †;

The

* Mr. Gray's Elogy, previous to its publication, was handed about in MS. and had amongst other admirers the Lady Cobham, who resided in the mansion-house at Stoke-Pogeis. The performance inducing her to wish for the Author's acquaintance, Lady Schaub and Miss Speed, then at her house, undertook to introduce her to it. These two ladies waited upon the Author at his aunt's solitary habitation, where he at that time resided, and not finding him at home they left a card behind them. Mr. Gray, surpris'd at such a compliment, returned the visit; and as the beginning of this intercourse bore some appearance of romance, he gave the humorous and lively account of it which the Long Story contains.

† The mansion-house at Stoke-Pogeis, then in the possession of Viscountess Cobham. The style of building which

The Huntingdons and Hattons there
Employ'd the pow'r of Fairy hands

To raise the cieling's fretted height,
Each pannel in achievements clothing,
Rich windows that exclude the light,
And passages that lead to nothing.

Full oft within the spacious walls,
When he had fifty winters o'er him,
My grave Lord-Keeper * led the brawls;
The seal and maces danc'd before him.

His bushy beard and shoe-strings green,
His high-crown'd hat and fatten doublet,

which we now call Queen Elizabeth's is here admirably described, both with regard to it's beauties and defects; and the third and fourth stanzas delineate the fantastick manners of her time with equal truth and humour. The house formerly belonged to the Earls of Huntingdon and the family of Hatton.

* Sir Christopher Hatton, promoted by Queen Elizabeth for his graceful person and fine dancing.—Brawls were a sort of figure-dance then in vogue, and probably deemed as elegant as our modern cotillons, or still more modern quadrilles.

Mov'd the stout heart of England's Queen,
Tho' Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it,

What, in the very first beginning!
Shame of the versifying tribe!
Your hist'ry whither are you spinning?
Can you do nothing but describe?

A house there is (and that's enough)
From whence one fatal morning issues
A brace of warriors*, not in buff,
But rustling in their silks and tissues.

The first came cap-a-pee from France,
Her conqu'ring destiny fulfilling,
Whom meaner beauties eye askance,
And vainly ape her art of killing.

The other Amazon kind Heav'n
Had arm'd with spirit, wit, and satire;
But Cobham had the polish giv'n,
And tipp'd her arrows with good-nature.

* The reader is already apprised who these ladies were; the two descriptions are prettily contrasted; and nothing can be more happily turned than the compliment to Lady Cobham in the eighth stanza.

To

To celebrate her eyes, her hair—
 Coarse panegyrics would but tease her;
 Melissa is her *nom de guerre*;
 Alas! who would not wish to please her?

With bonnet blue and capuchine,
 And aprons long, they hid their armour,
 And veil'd their weapons bright and keen
 In pity to the country farmer.

Fame in the shape of Mr. P——t*
 (By this time all the parish know it)
 Had told that thereabouts there lurk'd
 A wicked imp they call a Poet,

Who prowl'd the country far and near,
 Bewitch'd the children of the peasants,
 Dry'd up the cows and lam'd the deer,
 And suck'd the eggs and kill'd the pheasants.

* It has been said, that this gentleman, a neighbour and acquaintance of Mr. Gray's in the country, was much displeas'd at the liberty here taken with his name, yet surely without any great reason.

My

My Lady heard their joint petition,
Swore by her coronet and ermine,
She'd issue out her high commission
To rid the manor of such vermine.

The heroines undertook the task ;
Thro' lanes unknown, o'er stiles, they ventur'd,
Rapp'd at the door, nor stay'd to ask,
But bounce into the parlour enter'd.

The trembling family they daunt,
They flirt, they sing, they laugh, they tattle,
Rummage his mother, pinch his aunt,
And up stairs in a whirlwind rattle.

Each hole and cupboard they explore,
Each creek and cranny of his chamber,
Run hurry-skurry round the floor,
And o'er the bed and tester clamber ;

Into the drawers and china pry,
Papers and books, a huge imbroglio !
Under a tea-cup he might lie,
Or creas'd like dogs-ears in a folio.

On the first marching of the troops,
The Muses, hopeless of his pardon,
Convey'd him underneath their hoops
To a small closet in the garden.

So Rumour says; (who will believe)
But that they left the door a-jar,
Where safe, and laughing in his sleeve,
He heard the din of distant war.

Short was his joy: he little knew
The pow'r of magick was no fable;
Out of the window with they flew,
But left a spell upon the table.

The words too eager to unriddle
The Poet felt a strange disorder;
Transparent bird-lime form'd the middle,
And chains invisible the border.

So cunning was the apparatus,
The pow'rful pot-hooks did so move him,
That will-he nill-he to the great house
He went as if the devil drove him.

Yet

Yet on his way (no sign of grace
 For folks in fear are apt to pray)
 To Phœbus he preferr'd his case,
 And begg'd his aid that dreadful day.

The Godhead would have back'd his quatref,
 But, with a blush, on recollection
 Own'd that his quiver and his laurel
 'Gainst four such eyes were no protection.

The court was fat, the culprit there;
 Forth from their gloomy mansions creeping
 The Lady Janes and Joans repair,
 And from the gallery stand peeping:

Such as in silence of the night
 Come (sweep) along some winding entry,
 (Styack * has often seen the sight)
 Or at the chapel-door stand sentry:

In peaked hoods and mantles tarnish'd,
 Sour visages enough to scare ye,
 High dames of honour once that garnish'd
 The drawing-room of fierce Queen Mary!

* The house-keeper.

The peer's comes: the audience stare,
 And doff their hats with due submission;
 She court'ies as she takes her chair
 To all the people of condition.

The bard with many an artful fib
 Had in imagination fenc'd him,
 Disprov'd the arguments of Squib*,
 And all that Groom† could urge against him.

But soon his rhetorick forsook him
 When he the solemn hall had seen;
 A sudden fit of ague shook him;
 He stood as mute as poor Maclean‡.

Yet something he was heard to mutter,
 "How in the park beneath an old tree
 " (Without design to hurt the butter,
 " Or any malice to the poultry)

"He once or twice had penn'd a sonnet,
 "Yet hop'd that he might save his bacon;

* The steward.

† Groom of the chamber.

‡ A famous highwayman, hanged the week before.

“ Numbers would give their oaths upon it
 “ He ne'er was for a conj'rer taken.”

The ghostly prudes with hagged * face
 Already had condemn'd the finner :
 My Lady rose, and with a grace—
 She smil'd, and bid him come to dinner †.

“ Jesu-Maria ! Madam Bridget,
 “ Why, what can the Viscountess mean ? ”
 Cry'd the square hoods in woful fidget,
 “ The times are alter'd quite and clean !

“ Decorum's turn'd to mere civility ;
 “ Her air and all her manners shew it :
 “ Commend me to her affability !
 “ Speak to a Commoner and Poet ! ”

* Hagged, *i. e.* the face of a witch or hag ; the epithet *hagard* has been sometimes mistaken as conveying the same idea, but it means a very different thing, *viz.* wild and farouche, and is taken from an unreclaimed hawk, called an *hagard*.

† Here the story finishes : the exclamation of the ghosts which follow is characteristick of the Spanish manners of the age when they are supposed to have lived ; and the five hundred stanzas said to be lost may be imagined to contain the remainder of their long-winded expostulation.

[Here

[*Here 500 stanzas are lost.*]

And so God save our noble King,
And guard us from long-winded lubbers;
That to eternity would sing,
And keep my lady from her rubbers.

EPI.

E P I T A P H

O N

MRS. C L A R K E*.

LO! where this silent Marble weeps,
 A Friend, a wife, a Mother, sleeps;
 A Heart, within whose sacred cell
 The peaceful Virtues lov'd to dwell.
 Affection warm, and faith sincere,
 And soft humanity were there.
 In agony, in death resign'd,
 She felt the wound she left behind.
 Her infant Image, here below,
 Sits smiling on a Father's woe:
 Whom what awaits, while yet he strays
 Along the lonely vale of days?
 A Pang, to secret sorrow dear;
 A Sigh; an unavailing Tear;
 'Till Time shall ev'ry grief remove,
 With Life, with Memory, and with Love.

* This Lady, the Wife of Dr. Clarke, Physician at Epfom, died April 27, 1757; and is buried in the Church of Beckenham, Kent.

TRANS.

TRANSLATION

FROM

STATIUS.

THIRD in the labours of the disk came on,
 With sturdy step and slow, Hippomedon;
 Artful and strong, he pois'd the well-known
 weight,
 By Phlegyas warn'd and fir'd by Mnestheus'
 fate,
 That to avoid and this to emulate.
 His vig'rous arm he try'd before he flung,
 Brac'd all his nerves and every sinew strung,
 Then with a tempest's whirl and wary eye
 Pursu'd his cast and hurl'd the orb on high;
 The orb on high, tenacious of it's course,
 True to the mighty arm that gave it force,
 Far overleaps all bound, and joys to see
 Its ancient lord secure of victory:
 The theatre's green height and woody wall
 Tremble ere it precipitates its fall;

The

The pond'rous mass sinks in the cleaving
ground,

While vales and woods and echoing hills
rebound.

As when from *Ætna's* smoking summit broke
The eyeless Cyclops heav'd the craggy rock,
Where Ocean frets beneath the dashing oar,
And parting surges round the vessel roar,
'Twas there he aim'd the meditated harm,
And scarce Ulysses scap'd his giant arm.

A tiger's pride the victor bore away,
With native spots and artful labour gay,
A shining border round the margin roll'd,
And calm'd the terrors of his claws in gold.

CAMBRIDGE, *May 8, 1736.*

GRAY

GRAY OF HIMSELF.

TOO poor for a bribe, and too proud to importune,
He had not the method of making a fortune;
Could love and could hate, so was thought
somewhat odd;
No very great wit, he believ'd in a God:
A post or a pension he did not desire,
But left church and state to Charles Townsend
and Squire.

T H E E N D.



